Robert Nisbet
On Death

John Podhoretz
On Ghosts

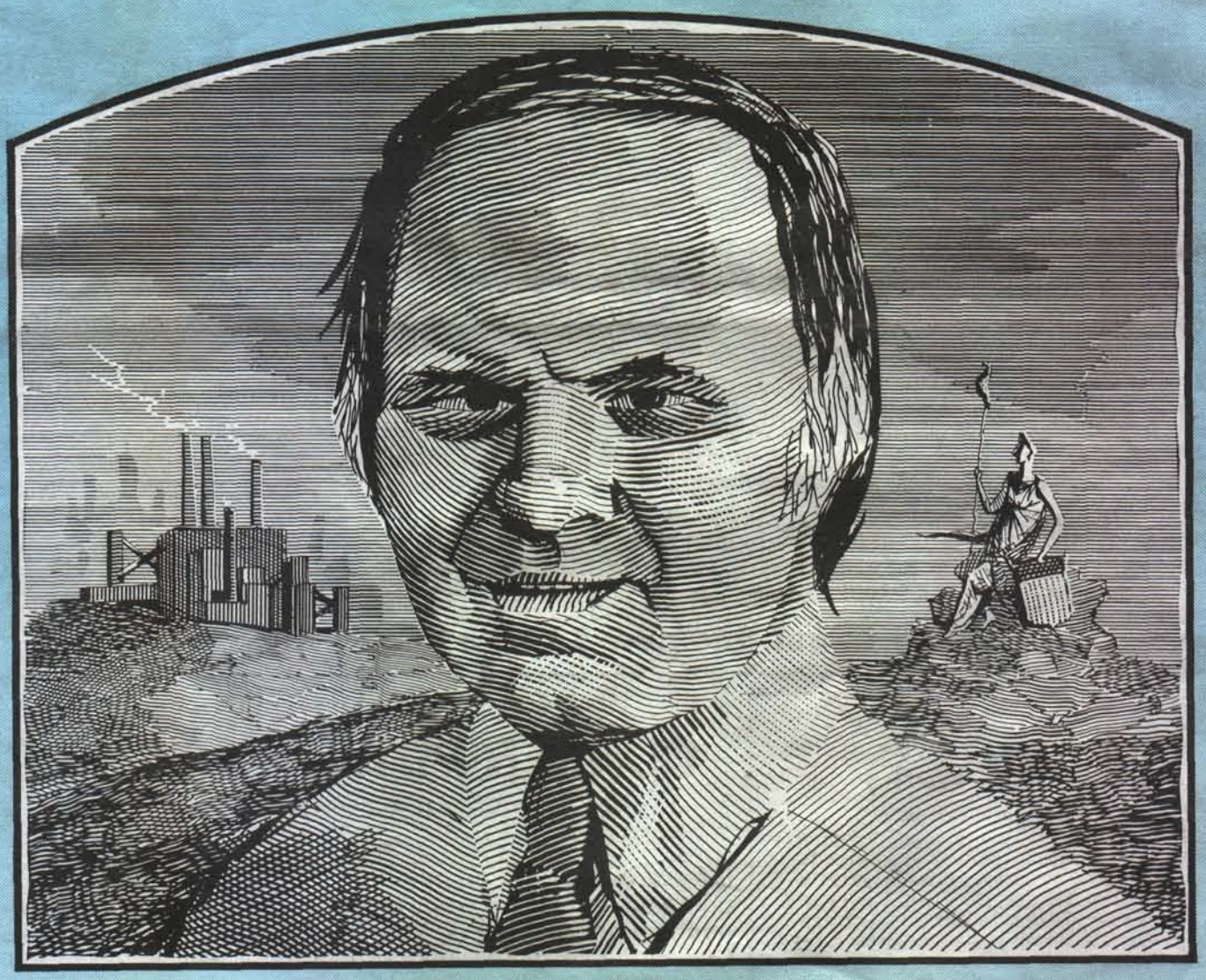
THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR®

VOL. 15 OCTOBER 1982 NO. 10

Robert D. Novak: Central American Journal

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.: Teddy White Loves America

Michael Novak's Commercial Republic by Philip F. Lawler



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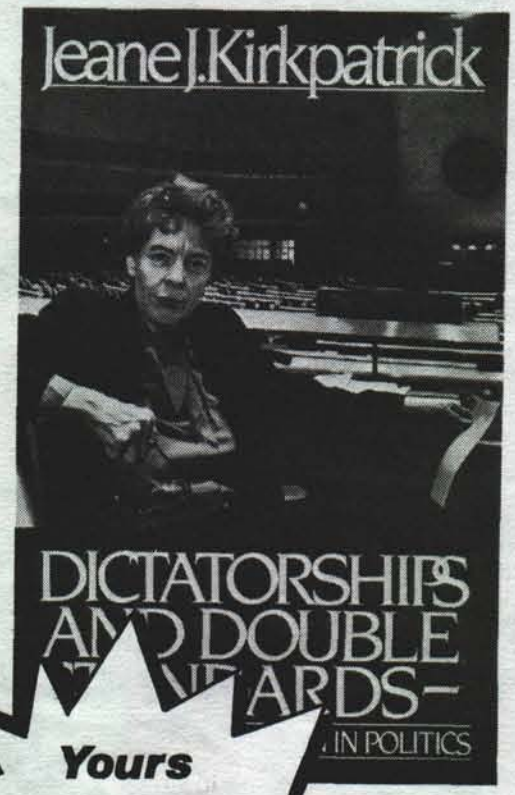

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The American Spectator **was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic ale in McSorley's Old Ale House. In 1967 the Saturday Evening Club took it over, rechristening it *The Alternative: An American Spectator;* but by November 1977 the word "alternative" had acquired such an esoteric fragrance that in order to discourage unsolicited manuscripts from florists, beauticians, and other creative types the Club reverted to the magazine's original name. *The American Spectator* is now published monthly at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.**

A one-year subscription (12 issues) costs $19, outside the United States $23. Foreign air mail rates sent on request. All correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to *The American Spectator,* P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, Indiana 47402, (812) 334-2715; New York office, (212) 724-3799. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 111 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. ISSN 0148-8414.

Published remarkably without regard to sex, life-style, race, color, creed, physical handicap, or national origin.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *The American Spectator,* P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, Indiana 47402.

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Volume 15, Number 10, October 1982.

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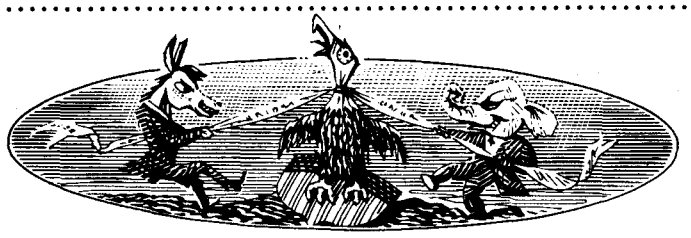

THE R**L*TY PRINCIPLE

by Tom Bethell

I have a horrible feeling your Correspondent in the Capital has been a bit remiss, failing to file a single report on the Reagan Administration to date, even though we are approaching its half-way mark. The recent flurry of comment provoked by the tax-increase bill and the Taiwan sell-out provides me with a suitable excuse.

First I should say that I have always defended Reagan against his detractors in Washington, often the kind of people who would like to have Bob McNamara, Elliot Richardson, or Clark Clifford as their well-trained President. Ronald Reagan, I should think most people realize now, was vastly underrated when he came to Washington. I would further say that he has qualities of greatness. And until recently I had assumed that he would somehow prevail over the army of liberal ideologues arrayed against him, subsequently going down in the history books as one of those rare men who managed to resist the tide of fashionable opinion when it was bent on defeat and self-destruction.

Now I am not so sure. It's still a possibility, though. Reagan hasn't yet surrendered completely to the Praetorian Guard of press corps and White House advisers that surrounds him. (The Praetorian Guard protected the Roman emperor. Sometimes they decided to kill him, and usually they selected his successor. Needless to say they dictated imperial policy.) Nevertheless, the recent tax-increase bill was very bad for Reagan, a great triumph of the Guard over the Emperor's best instincts, and the Taiwan sell-out almost as bad.

Still, it's possible that Reagan could escape without too much damage provided he holds the line and makes up his own mind from now on. The tax bill will be damaging to the economy, but perhaps only mildly so. Reagan should be alerted that his "pragmatic" and "moderate" friends—David Stockman, for one—are planning to come back for another tax increase next year (elimination of indexing, restoration of bracket creep, yea for inflation as tax-collector), and that Stockman will have the full Praetorian support of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Will Reagan be able to resist the onslaught of pragmatism?

What is worrying, of course, is that Reagan does seem to have bought the Praetorian line about being an "ideologue" who was taking insufficient notice of "reality," neglecting "pragmatism," and so on. Aren't we getting a little sick of hearing these words? I'm surprised, in fact, that all those like-thinking, left-leaning consensus liberals such as Haynes Johnson, Mary McGrory, Anthony Lewis, Richard Cohen, Leonard Silk, Hobart Rowen, Tom Wicker, and on and on, don't find it embarrassing that they echo one another so faithfully week after week; endlessly repeating the same formulae about pragmatism triumphing over ideology and the need to bow to "reality." Perhaps, on the other hand, it is somehow reassuring to be a part of a collective think-team.

What is this "reality," this rock against which the waves of ideology repeatedly shatter? May I suggest that it is nothing more noble than achieved liberalism?

Reality is the sum total of government programs already in place—except for defense spending, which is unrealistic. Reality is said to be "gritty," and consists of "messy facts." Wouldn't we like to be rid of them sometimes? Of course, but reality can't be wished away. The Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal is a reality—don't mess with that messy fact. Welfare at home is a reality, food stamps are a reality, FDR was realistic. Polls are realistic. Abortion is a reality, affirmative action is a reality, entitlement programs are a reality, the need to bail out Mexico is a reality, and the pipeline embargo is unrealistic. European disapproval of the embargo is a reality, the PLO is a reality, Begin is unrealistic, the need for negotiated settlements around the world is a reality.

Reality, ladies and gentlemen, is the liberal ideology: Note the word when you see it. Lurking behind the pen you will find a liberal ideologue pretending to be a pragmatist. "Wishful thinkers love the slogans of realism," Frank Sheed wrote in 1953. "When you hear a speaker say, 'Facts, gentlemen, are stubborn things,' prepare for a ramble through Utopia."

I give credit to William Greider, the good writer now with *Rolling Stone*, for initiating this most recent defense of the liberal sand castle. A full month before Reagan's inauguration he wrote an article in the *Washington Post* entitled "When Right Meets Reality." He predicted that "pure abstractions of ideological principle will be settled by crass, messy, homely facts," adding that a "soaring oil price" would soon be a part of this reality. This meant that "the old folks' heating bills" would have to be paid by government—whatever ideologues might think. The reality was that the oil price was then at its peak.

Robert G. Kaiser of the *Post* and Steven V. Roberts in the *New York Times* swiftly followed up on the reality theme—both before Reagan was sworn in. "The realities of wielding power seem to be catching up quite early with Ronald Reagan," added Ed Magnuson in *Time*. Bill Moyers said: "Ronald Reagan has tipped his hat away from ideology, and toward r**l*ty."

"Mr. Stockman has been urging the President to face r**l*ty," echoed Anthony Lewis. "That means trying to capture some of the tax revenues lost last summer." In May, Lefty Lewis repeated himself and everyone else, noting triumphantly that something nice was beginning to "affect the Reagan Presidency after 16 months: r**l*ty." His column was headed: The R**l*ty Principle.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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Two writers in the *Washington Post* then noted that Reagan's promise to dismantle the Departments of Education and Energy had bumped into: reality. This was said to be: gr*tty.

Literally thousands of such examples could be given. But here's a final example that really does have a piquant flavor: "In a candid comment to columnist Henry Brandon, White House aide James Baker said he is not compromising Reagan's convictions. 'I'm simply adjusting them to realities,' he said."

The trouble is that such people as Baker, his senatorial counterpart Howard, and Bob ("Has Grown") Dole really are pragmatists. That is, they are not guided by any philosophical principles. Oh, yes, they want all things nice: economic growth, low interest rates, high employment. Just like everyone else. These things are not at issue. Controversy arises only when ways of achieving them are proposed. At that point two incompatible ideologies emerge: left and right, liberal and conservative, socialist and capitalist.

Sadly enough, we happen to live in an age when the Left, broadly speaking, controls the terms of public discourse, and has arrogated to itself both the taxonomic and the name-calling privilege. Liberals and leftists say they "reject labels," but they are mighty quick to pin them on others: on the *rigid ideologues,* the *faithful* and the *true believers,* the strident *hardliners,* on the *New Right* with its *purity,* its *dogmas* and *schisms.*

Who has been doing all this labeling and name-calling? Leftists, by any chance? Nothin' here but us pragmatists and moderates, whistled Moyers and McGrory, Lewis, Greider, Haynes Johnson, and a hundred others. So perhaps it is time to point out that the government solutions these people invariably, consistently, and unanimously support are compatible with the left-liberal ideology, which is the same as the age-old ideology of socialism, but in modern dress (no need to go on about the "state ownership of the means of production" anymore, for example).

This ideology dictates the following "realities": The government should expand its control over as many areas of life as possible, and religion should be excluded from these areas. It should capture as much of the nation's wealth as possible, and redistribute it so that all subjects are equal to one another, if possible. The government should not pick quarrels with other socialist countries. On the contrary, it should negotiate and compromise with them. But it should crack down hard on countries where the governing structure makes the emergence of socialism difficult—i.e., countries with market economies and no elections (Chile, Taiwan, etc.).

Ladies and gentlemen, this is ideology, not pragmatism. Interestingly, those who cannot see this really are pragmatists. It takes ideology to perceive a rival ideology in others. Only someone guided by a consistent philosophy can see that another's behavior has an equal, if opposite, consistency to it. To the unwary pragmatist, all such behavior appears random. That is why the Twin Bakers and the Grown Dole have not been able to figure out that, in assenting to what they have been told is "reality," they have really succumbed to an ideology. These people can't tell the difference. Did someone say balance the budget? Good, should we cut spending or raise taxes? Oh, the former is unrealistic? Let's raise taxes then!

You see, there is one thing the Doleful Bakers, Domenici, Gergen & Darman do know for sure. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have more "clout" than *Human Events* and the *Conservative Digest.* They've figured *that* out for themselves. So if it's all the same anyway—just a bunch of people trying to solve our problems without preconceptions—why not go along with the powerful and the fashionable? Look what happened to Richard Nixon when he tried to go up against these guys. It doesn't pay, you know. . . . You can't win without the media . . . so Ron, be sensible and adjust to reality. You mean well, but you haven't quite grasped how the system works around here. Do what the *Times* says, then they'll be on your side. Think what a plus that will be, when the time comes to run for reelection, or for our good friend George Bush to run, as the case may be.

There's still a chance that Reagan can prevail over the Praetorian Guard. But there's no chance if he doesn't realize how much danger he's in. Against his own best instincts, he's being led step by step to accept an ideology which is embraced by people who are afraid that his own beliefs, if put to the test, might succeed. □

EDITORIAL

THE PLOT TO DESTROY DAN RATHER AND ME

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

President Reagan is trying to destroy Dan Rather and me. Why he has singled us out I cannot fathom, but it is chilling. The Republic's media hawks are now probing the Rather affair as meticulously as investigators for a grand jury. I hope they will not forget me.

One week last month, while Dan and I were duly applying ourselves to our arts—he on a Tuesday evening, I on a Monday afternoon—the President telephoned us with complaints. Did the late Alexander Graham Bell ever envisage his invention as a tool of government intimidation? I doubt it, but I can tell you that my esteemed colleagues throughout the media worry prodigiously about the effect of these calls—CHILLING, CHILLING. One can easily imagine the Columbia School of Journalism convening a high-level seminar to probe the question, "When the President Calls Must the Virtuous Journalist Answer?" Well, Dan and I answered.

Dan's call came as he was earnestly talking into his microphone during the evening news. My call came as I was tapping out a book recounting the glory of the Carter years. Of the two, Dan was in far greater peril of being manipulated. Writing is more deliberative than talking, and I can erase. A presidential call could panic Dan, causing him to utter an indiscretion or, worse, an untruth. The thing has happened before, and when it does Dan flummoxes millions of Americans who come to him for enlightenment while they stuff their faces or remove their socks. Nor is it reassuring to know that once Dan's wisdom has wafted across the airwaves it is defunct; most people forget in a matter of days and sometimes in a matter of minutes. TV news' impermanence assures its slovenly standards.

When apprised of the President's call many in Washington were at one with Roger Mudd, who adjudged the call "interesting" because "it reveals how his [the President's] mind works." Here is how befuddled we have become by the Freudian whim-wham. The President enters a complaint, and the Republic's sages fasten upon the matter of "how his mind works" rather than what he said. To Dan he said, "I am concerned about the possible harm these reports [Dan's reports on U.S.-Taiwan relations] may do to our international relations." To me he said, "Did I get you in your New York office or in Indiana?"

He got me in Indiana, and professed his belief that he has remained true to his conservative principles and friends. Moreover he believes he made a satisfactory effort to staff his government with like-minded people. Yet it was not easy for him to attract conservatives to government, particularly conservatives from the business community. Many were reluctant to leave their jobs. →

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

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I can imagine his travail. Businessmen, contrary to the power-hungry image of them depicted on television, are often quite guileless, at times even stupid about current affairs. Tom Wolfe tells the story of his recent dinner party conversation with a titan of industry. No matter what the topic of discussion, the dialogue went like this. Wolfe: "Do you think a Polish Pope will change relations between the Vatican and Moscow?" Businessman: "I met the Pope. Charlie Small, the head of the Light Weight Corporation, got us an audience with him; and it wasn't one of those large ones, only 270 CEOs. You know Charlie Small? He's a Knight of Columbus. You ought to get to know Charlie Small." I sympathize with the President. Political intelligence is almost as rare in the business community as in the American Political Science Association.

The Reagan Administration stands at a crossroads. Guided by a man of the highest character and superb temperament, it has achieved much. Our standing in the world is being restored. Our economy is improving, though government spending remains gluttonous. The silliness that has encroached upon government is slowly being banished. Possibly someday American government will again reflect the character of the American people.

Yet many perceive that the Administration is losing its bearings and the Reagan constituency is fragmenting. Can Ronald Reagan pull things together? He has surprised his critics many times before. I for one cannot count him out, nor can I say "he never calls, he never writes." □

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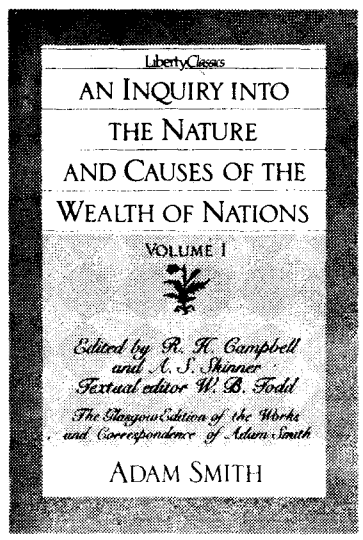
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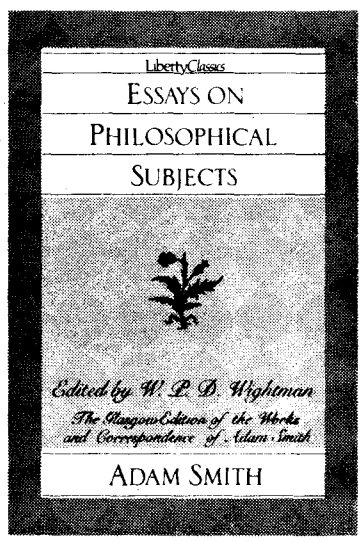

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By Adam Smith

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FACING OUR ENEMIES

Last month, while Israeli forces were doing the dirty work that has to be done to preserve freedom and national existence in a dangerous world, NBC's John Chancellor appeared in Beirut on location as they say—in this case a sunny balcony—to report that the Israeli forces had been very "savage." They had taken on a new character, that of "Imperial Israel." Thus the defaming of another American ally picks up steam fueled by Americans in high places. Not all our allies are so clinically scrutinized, then diabolized. The diabolizing comes down only on those who actively oppose America's enemies.

But does America actually have enemies in the world? The question brings us to one of the great historic failings of America's foreign policy establishment and of influential Americans in general, to wit: the inability or refusal to recognize that America does indeed have enemies, inveterate enemies, people who hate us whether from rational or irrational motives, people who will never negotiate in good faith. Some Americans recognize the inflexible animosity of our enemies only after being used as witless tools in the destruction of friendly nations, viz., South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Others never learn.

All over the world there are vicious people delighted by any opportunity to lay America low. Pope Leo X used to recall pointedly how his father, the worldly and wily Lorenzo de Medici, would say, "You should understand that those who speak ill of us do not love us." This venerable wisdom is lost on John Chancellor and those like Massachusetts' fresh voice of soi-disant neo-liberalism, Sen. Paul Tsongas. Senator Tsongas presumes to stand on middle ground in Israel's dispute with the PLO, or in El Salvador's dispute with the terrorists that afflict that woebegone land. Alas,

(*continued on page 41*)

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• August, and though the Sun Belt continued to wilt under an incandescent sun and ghastly sky, the North was soothed by wholesome, acid-free Canadian air. By the end of the month many of the nation's schoolchildren were reunited with their schoolmistresses, while at our leading state universities the coed class resumed its hectic social schedule. In a salute to President Reagan the stock market went deliriously upward, and to complete the euphoria the Palestine Liberation Organization departed Beirut on a victory tour of choice Middle East locations. "I want nothing more to do with this Israel," reiterated Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, and the happy irenic PLO shot 100 or so of their own yokels while exiting the city.

• Other notable wags were no less loquacious. Writing in *McCall's*, imprisoned schoolmarm Jean Harris called on Americans to "take a long hard look into our own prison system," as if all of us could be in her position. At any rate, she has come to resent the posh Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Westchester County because it "manufactures frustration, severe mental illness, despair, resentment, fear, and self-hatred"—all very unhealthy conditions for the criminally prone. By contrast, John W. Hinckley, Jr. has been feeling good about himself, so good in fact that he composed an ode to his favorite movie star for publication in the estimable *National Enquirer*: "I have come to shoot you down with my bloody gun . . . Look here at my bloody knife, I think I'll stab you first . . . It should quench my thirst."

• In other publishing news, Cleis Press of Minneapolis has issued "a book only women could publish," i.e., *Voices in the Night: Women Speaking About Incest*. Permit me to cite from a poem in the anthology by karen marie christa mean in which the poetess reflects on a childhood encounter with a precocious young cleric: "I want to tell you how heavy/a fifteen year old man's hands are/on your shoulders/when you are seven/How they have the weight of the Church/in them . . . " In fairness, however, I should note that not all women are as eager to be published. For instance, there is the 23-year-old Kalamazoo, Michigan resident who took 30 nude photographs of herself as a Christmas present for her boyfriend and is now suing K-Mart Corporation, claiming a photo department employee made extra prints of her film and distributed them to friends.

• For all our nation's and planet's miseries, there were a few hopeful signs. San Francisco Supervisor Carol Ruth Silver has written to Queen Elizabeth of England urging her to reinstate her disgraced personal bodyguard who had been philandering with a male prostitute. Mind you, this is not the first time Supervisor Silver has written to a public figure on the question of homosexuality. Last year she sent a "letter of condolence" to former Mississippi congressman Jon C. Hinson after his arrest on a morals charge in a Capitol Hill men's room. And we can assume the good woman was in attendance late in the month at San Francisco's Kezar Stadium for the historic homosexual "olympic-style athletic and human rights demonstration," a gathering of some 1,300 of the world's finest deviant sportsmen for nine days of competition in 17 events. Heading the lesbian field was Sarah Lewinstein, the professional bowler. Participants were expected from at least 12 countries, organizers said, confirming their wish that the games would provide "a positive ray of hope beyond the industrialized world." The USSR, alas, is boycotting the event.

• But as one might suspect, the Soviet Union did not hesitate to direct its progressive energies into other fields, capped by the eight-day Soyuz flight of Svetlana Y. Savitskaya, whose sojourn in space Tass proclaimed a triumph of the emancipation of women under Soviet rule. "She is a young, slim, and petite woman," her two male escorts were instructed on the eve of the flight. "It is no secret that women are more accurate and painstaking, particularly in carrying out experiments which call for delicate and punctual work." The best response Washington could come up with was to announce a change in Navy policy on pregnant sailors and to allow the execution of a murderer in Virginia—whereupon the Soviets promptly condemned a Central Asian bookkeeper to death on bribery and extortion charges. Would that the Cold War were merely a matter of rhetoric!

• Indeed, life in the United States would not desist from its repressive course. Near Boston, William McKenney escaped from the Plymouth County Jail to join his wife who was giving birth at a nearby hospital. "Because he was a family man, he wanted to be close to his wife, and that was his downfall," a Boston police sergeant gloated after sheriffs recaptured McKenney outside "the wife's" room. In San Diego, a 21-year-old college student and son of a bearded college professor became the first draft-registration resister convicted for refusing to lend his name to a good cause—one down, and 699,999 to go. And police in San Jose arrested fugitive parolee Benjamin Sargis, 49, and his three female housemates, the remnants of a nearly forgotten radical group which had passed the last several years robbing banks, collecting welfare payments and food stamps, and reading the revolutionary works of Che Guevara. As late as 1978, Sargis had seemed on the verge of making it in the real world, according to Walter China, his parole officer: "He told me he wanted to get a job as an instructor in sexual therapy because he had experience in that."

• In animal news, Flapping Francine flew 54 feet, 4 inches to capture the grand championship race sponsored by the Juniata Squadron of the Pennsylvania Wing of the International Chicken Flying Association, and Tom McBee lost 60,000 bees to rustlers at his Greeneville, Texas farm. In Trenton, New Jersey, Joseph "Jo-Jo" Giorgianni, an asthmatic, 500-pound convicted rapist, served only one week of a 15-year sentence before a judge ordered his release on the grounds that a lack of air-conditioning in his cell posed a threat to his life. But no sooner was he out in the streets than a prosecutor caught Jo-Jo abusing his health again—smoking cigars.

• In Washington, Leroy Williams, congressional page *sans pareil*, recanted the sensational charges that had held the nation on edge through the summer, and in Bloomington, Indiana, Larime Wilson told a Monroe County Superior Court that she cannot repay the $1,154 she owes Indiana University because money is no longer a part of her "life philosophy." Still more nonviolent rhetoric was heard from protestors who chanted "Gonna Burn Jane Byrne" on her honor's arrival at the third annual Chicago Fest on Lake Michigan, and in Moberly, Missouri, scoutmaster J.D. Gatzmeyer, 37, and his assistant Kenneth Willard, 19, have been charged with branding the rumps of six Boy Scouts with a hot clothes hanger during a campout. Sheriff Orville Price said the imprints were made by Willard while Gatzmeyer held the boys' legs down "so when (the metal) touched them they wouldn't jerk." Any bets Leroy Williams takes up scouting? *-WP*

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Robert Nisbet

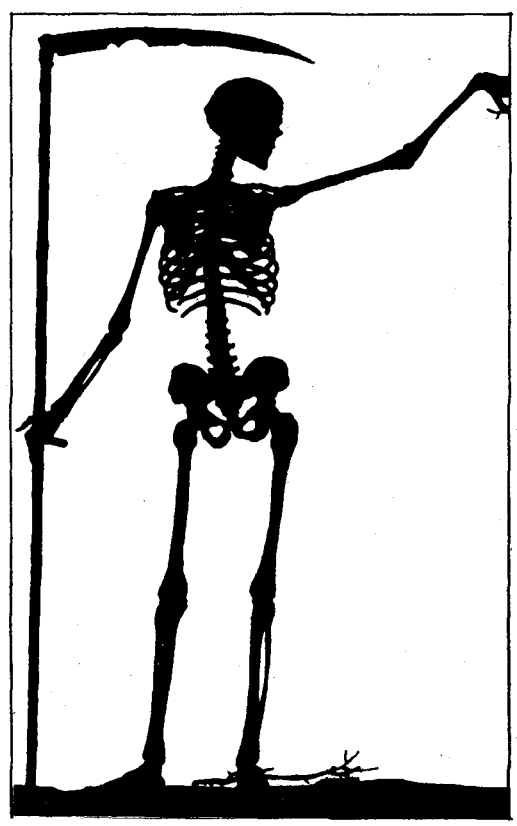
DEATH

Learning to die all over again.

Of the recurring crises of the human condition—birth, marriage, death—the last has drawn the vastly greater part of man's ritual propensity, most of it going to the welfare of the dead in the next world. There seems to be an instinctual disposition to repudiate any thought of death being simply the final stage of the individual life cycle. Even the repugnant spectacle of the human body in process of decomposition has not prevented the almost universal belief that there is some human essence which is destined for survival in the hereafter. Whether one leaves food and clothing in the grave or merely utters prayers, the premise is the same. The community that nourished in life, nourishes also in death. Death as part of the community, death as wound to the community, and death as departure from the community has been for at least fifty thousand years the stated or unstated philosophy of virtually the whole of the human race, the only species to bury its dead.

But in spreading parts of the world, starting with the West and reaching its highest incidence in America, this philosophy is eroding. The socially annihilating individualism—that is, the atomization of society, chiefly by the modern state—that has led to the dismemberment and fragmentation of the traditional forms of community, especially kinship, has removed more and more of the communal properties of death, just as it has of birth and marriage. In modern society people are increasingly baffled and psychologically unprepared for the incidence of death among loved ones. It is not that their grief is greater or that the incomprehensibility of death is increased. The bafflement is in considerable part a result of the smaller size of the family, which gives greater emotional value to each of the members. But even more, it is a result of the decline in significance of the traditional means of ritual completion of the fact of death. Death leaves a kind of moral suspense that is terminated psychologically only with greater and greater difficulty. The social meaning of death has changed with the social position of death.

The social position of death in Western society ranges from a kind of obscenity, whose name is as improper in polite circles as sex was among the Victorians, all the way to a kind of celebrity, receiving immense attention in the form of books, articles, television documentaries, and lectures. With one hand people push death under the carpet, but with the other they reach out almost obsessively for help. "The long habit of living," wrote Thomas Browne, "indisposeth us to dying." But however indisposed Paleolithic man and all his successors down to the last century or two may have been, such indisposition could not have been as great where death was just as much a part of family life, of community life, as were birth and marriage. No one was unacquainted with the physical fact of death, directly and personally.



It is not entirely that death was earlier and more frequent in human society until recent times; it is rather that death was highly visible to everyone, and in as concrete a way as is possible. Human beings knew death so directly, so recurrently, in the much shorter life cycle, that there was inevitably less of the abstract preoccupation with death known today. In our time an astounding number of people have never seen a dead human body. Our ancestors could, within the house, wash, dress, adorn, and otherwise minister themselves to the corpse in anticipation of burial and mourning. Today people leave that to the mortician and, on a constantly widening scale, avoid even sight of the dead person. Inevitably, cremation and instant dispatch of the ashes crowd out burial. Nor can it be claimed that this behavior is mute recognition of the disappearance of available land for cemeteries, for peoples at other times thought nothing of using and reusing graves, and there were charnel houses for the bones. No, the beginning of the end of funerary and mourning rites in modern society is social, a part of that wider tidal movement of modern history that has destroyed so much which lies intermediate between individual and state.

What has happened to death has

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happened also to birth, childhood, marriage, and senescence in modern Western society. These have never before had the same functional role and meaning they have today. The entire emphasis is now put upon the conjugal couple; the child is idealized and romanticized in a way that would have been beyond belief before the nineteenth century; and "senior citizens" are venerated once a year as mothers and fathers. But the inescapable fact, despite all of the national holiday devotions and everything that has been done for the welfare of children which exceeds all other ages put together, is that the true value of these roles has withered, for they have been extracted from the traditional community, which alone is the source and sustenance of birth, marriage, and death, and have been located in the individual.

In times past, individuals did not have children; the community did in its act of acceptance through some form of baptism. The physical fact of birth was not nearly so important as the social fact of birth. In the ancient world no child was "born" until ten days or say after parturition, when it was duly and ritually received or, when necessary, rejected. Marriage was not an affair of two individuals uniting and thus forming a new "family"; marriage was basically a rite of adoption whereby, in strict accord with the bans on incestuous union, the girl from one household was ritually cleansed of her former family identity, her name altered so that its new suffix would indicate that fundamentally she was a daughter in the new family, a possession of husband and house father. Ancient Rome gave the customary and legal base to this sense of marriage so far as Western society is concerned, but everywhere, through the greater part of human history, this has been the significance of marriage. There was a conjugal union, to be sure, but its meaning came from the larger community, starting with kindred.

So long as death was concrete, personally experienced over and over in life, public rather than hidden or transferred to mortuary technicians, and above all, familiar ritually in the kinship community, it was comprehensible and acceptable, at least to a greater degree than it is now in American society. One thinks of the linguistic abominations *pass on*, *pass away*, and *called for*, which so fastidiously avoid the words *die* and *death*, words as noble as any to be found in the English language. But all the while people are queasily avoiding direct personal contact with death, in substance and in name, they are becoming increasingly obsessed by it in the abstract. No doubt the current mania about "health"—evidenced in health maintenance organizations, health clubs, health pursuits of every kind, with jogging the *pièce de resistance*—is but another manifestation of unease with death. No one knows what health is; sickness, yes; and originally the treating of sickness, not the maintenance of health, was the sworn responsibility of the physician.

Lewis Thomas reports that in his own experience with the dying, there is, at the very end of life, a detached acceptance of death, a serenity and release from care never known before. Rare indeed is the final struggle, the agony, the unwillingness to die that so many books and television documentaries favor. Thomas cites the physician Osler to the effect that dying is "not such a bad thing to do after all." Osler took a dour view of people who spoke of the pain and grief of death, except in the minds of family, friends, and onlookers. Thomas speculates on whether there may possibly be, as the result of evolutionary adaptation to the inexorability of death, "some protective physiological mechanism, switched on at the verge of death, carrying [the dying] through in a haze of tranquillity." The idea is plausible and certainly agreeable.

But more important than the physical onset of death in the individual is the place of death in the community, or rather in what is left of community in the increasingly anonymous, impersonal Western society. According to the wisdom of the past, death is, first and last, communal, not individual. If death and mourning are contained within the community, seen as wound and remembrance within the community, individuals cannot help but be fortified in the "long habit of life" so far as its eventual and necessary termination is involved. The modern indulgence in individualism has ill prepared people for the very sober responsibilities of the family, of the community in all its manifestations, and indeed of the nation itself.

There is nothing extraordinary in the fact that narcissism and egocentricity are the companions of the fear of death—or, for that matter, fear of birth, children, and even marriage—for the origins of all these lie basically in the individualism that Comte called "the disease of the Western world." Philippe Ariès shows how over the past ten centuries dread, apprehension, and rejection of death have grown in almost precise relation to the growth of individualism and repudiation of community. He distinguishes "death tamed," which is what it was in traditional society for thousands of years, from "untamed death," which is what it has become. Possibly the newly oriented medical profession, beginning to be taught how to minister to death as well as to life and disease, will help contemporary man come to grips with death in the way his forefathers did; perhaps the hospice movement will provide surrogate families to give all the sustentive attention that family once did for the dying; perhaps still other adaptations will make their way into currently apprehensive minds and will prove anodyne in the long run. But nothing is likely to matter very much until death, along with birth and marriage, ceases to be regarded as something happening primarily to the individual instead of to the community. Therefore, until somehow the reality and sense of community have been restored to Western society in national, local, and kinship spheres, people will continue to live in the void—ego-gratifying, hedonistic, narcissistic, subjective and at the same time, timorous, trepidant, fearful of death.

Nothing betokens life in community more than does mourning, with its rites, forbearances, weeds, and wailing. As Burke noted, true society, namely community, is a partnership of the dead and unborn as well as of the living. Death is bound to be a more acceptable, even desirable, fate if it has been known repeatedly in vicarious form through rites of mourning. Above all, there must be a restoration of ritual, of the drama of birth, life, and death. This must be ritual alone, not any of the subjectivisms which the twentieth century has made so corrosive to the social fabric. Of no account in death and mourning is one's actual state of mind and emotion on the occasion of ritual expression. The actor need not feel on any given day every last emotional drive inherent in his lines; he need only act. A New England widow's ritual devotion to her late husband took the form of weeds and withdrawal from society lasting many months. "You are obviously desolated by the loss," said one *naif* to the widow. "Don't be ridiculous," she replied. "My husband and I ceased even speaking to one another fifty years ago." More good may have been done the social bond by those weeds and that withdrawal from society than by all the muttered prayers since the beginning of time. The truly strong religions of the world are not those rich simply in the word but, far more important, in the act. □

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Philip F. Lawler

MICHAEL NOVAK'S COMMERCIAL REPUBLIC

What's so special about democratic capitalism?

"The first of all moral obligations," begins Michael Novak, "is to think clearly." At first glance, that statement seems either trivial or wrong-headed. Surely, the critics will say, morality is determined by good intentions, not by intellectual vigor. But Novak, at the outset of an ambitious treatise on social theory, makes this point quite carefully. No amount of good intention will rescue the actor who fails to understand a moral question properly. Lacking the ability to see things as they are, the most benevolent actor can produce miserable ethical results.

In making this point, Novak is not breaking any new ground for ethical theory. The scholastic philosophers listed *prudentia*—the capacity for making sound judgments—first among the cardinal virtues. But somewhere between the reign of scholasticism and the present day, the virtue of prudence lost its appeal, just as the word prudence itself was bastardized to connote nothing more than cautiousness. Today, a host of moral theorists ignore clear thinking in their idealistic drive for Utopia. So before he explores any new ground, Novak must reclaim a great deal of lost ethical territory.

Specifically, he must face the argument of the many moralists who favor socialism over capitalism. To these moralists, it matters little that socialism has added debacle after debacle to its sorry history. It matters little that in practice socialism invariably brings authoritarian (or worse) government as its companion. During the last few years, the intellectual respectability of socialism has been perforated by a volley of powerful critiques: Solzhenitsyn on its historical record, Kolakowski on its ideology, Shafarevich on its utopian heresies, Billington on its mystical origins. Yet the New Class clings to the besmirched ideal.

Is socialism still morally defensible? Novak asks that question explicitly. If capitalism (whatever its faults) proves so much more successful in practice, can idealists justify their preference for a shopworn alternative? Novak argues (following Shafarevich) that socialism, the supposed hope for the future, is in fact the bane of the past:

> Insofar as socialism is a unitary system, dominated in all its parts by a state apparatus, socialism is not an improvement upon democratic capitalism but a relapse into the tyrannical unities from which the latter emerged. A unitary, dominant, central state authority has been tried before. The enforcement of high moral ideals by coercion has been tried before.

In direct contrast to the history of socialism, capitalism has compiled a spectacular record of practical successes alongside a mediocre record for self-justification. Socialism fails, but while failing it spews out rhetoric about brotherhood and equality.

Capitalism succeeds, but in succeeding it lays itself open to charges of greed, self-interest, and vulgarity. As a theologian trained in the scholastic tradition, Novak sees the danger behind the prevailing rhetoric: It does not match reality. Just as socialism's historical failures point to concomitant flaws in its underlying ideology, so too the successes of capitalism point to unexamined strengths in the theory of the free market.

From Adam Smith to Friedrich von Hayek, the proponents of capitalism have argued simply that the free market is the most efficient economic mechanism, since it relies realistically on instincts toward self-interest. But the historical record points toward something more morally satisfactory than simple self-interest. A system based on self-interest would seem ill equipped to ameliorate working conditions for laborers, or improve the lot of the impoverished, or increase the probability that an ambitious commoner will become rich, while a lazy patrician sinks into poverty. Yet capitalism does all these things. Could it be that Adam Smith undersold the moral virtues of his favorite system?

In answering that question, Novak pauses to note that our society cannot be described simply as a capitalist economic system. Democratic political structures are equally important to the conduct of social affairs. If there is a single element that runs through the society, making it different from its predecessors, it is, strictly speaking, neither an economic nor a political regime; it is a willingness to accept divergent opinions. As Novak puts it, "something new is universally held to have appeared . . . and that something new is pluralism." Democratic capitalism does not seek to impose judgments on citizens; they are free to follow their own preferences at both the marketplace and the ballot box.

Critiques of democratic capitalism traditionally have centered on the regime's inability to advance the moral tone of the society. From Novak's perspective, such critiques are misguided. Just as the free

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market keeps government out of everyday economic affairs, so too the spirit of religious pluralism sets moral questions outside the ambit of the political system. Society thus is organized along three different lines. Following Daniel Bell, Novak separates out the political order, the economic order, and the moral-cultural order. In the case of the contemporary United States, for instance, a full description would include mention of our democratic polity, capitalist economy, and Judeo-Christian moral tradition.

Clearly, this division of society into three separate orders is an analytical tool, not an exhaustive definition. The three categories do not describe all possible societal arrangements, nor do they define every important aspect of the social order. The United States has been democratic, capitalist, and Judeo-Christian since its inception, but the changes within American society have been enormous. For a century, democratic capitalism proved compatible with slavery—a practice which, by our present lights, we regard as barbaric. What explains that change? Did we advance along the moral-cultural axis, or did political tensions render slavery impossible? Obviously the interaction among the three societal orders is extremely complex and delicate. So complex and delicate, in fact, that one wonders how useful this analytical approach can be.

Consider, for instance, the moral-cultural realm. Politics is defined ultimately by the ballot box, and economics by the marketplace. But where is the primary locus of the moral-cultural world? Or, to put the same question differently, what activities can be *excluded* from the moral-cultural realm? Poets, presumably, belong to the cultural world. But poets sell books; is publishing therefore cultural rather than economic? And if books belong to the cultural realm, what about television shows? Commercials? Newscasts? Is there any walk of life unaffected by moral and cultural changes? Is it ever possible to define a political system without reference to the culture from which it springs?

The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism,* a book written by a theologian for an audience interested in the morality of our system, concentrates heavily on the moral and cultural impact of democratic capitalism. Michael Novak is devastating in his criticism of the clergymen who spout judgments of economic systems without bothering to study the field carefully. Insofar as such clergymen have set themselves up as experts on comparative economy, his criticism is indubitably on target. But at some point a clergyman's critiques cease to involve economic systems directly. The function of the religious leader (acting on the moral-cultural continuum) is to inspire his followers to greater spiritual heights. When a priest condemns self-interested behavior, he is not thereby impugning capitalism; he is merely urging his congregation to live by different lights. Regardless of the economic and political arrangements, neither Jewish nor Christian leaders can ever be satisfied in this life; they are striving after a divine ideal, which mere men cannot reach alone. "The Word of God," says Novak, "is transcendent. It judges each and every system and finds each gravely wanting." A clergyman cannot become an apologist for any economic system without compromising his primary duties to God and his calling. He can, however, learn to make informed judgments about the moral virtues and flaws of competing systems. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* is written as a primer for those learning to make such discernments. Therefore, Novak embarks on the project of constructing a "theology of economics." (The phrase itself is unfortunate. Theology and economics are distinct, and a "theology of economics" makes no more sense than a "chemistry of music." But the author's intent is clear.)

Having disposed of socialism as an indefensible social arrangement, Novak devotes most of his energies to the rehabilitation of capitalism as a moral, as well as material, success. Inevitably, that brings the author face to face with a powerful adversary: Solzhenitsyn. Few people would deny that capitalism is more morally desirable in its ability to confer the fruits of freedom. But is a booming free market morally enervating, as Solzhenitsyn suggests? Do we pay for freedom and success in cultural decay? And if our culture is indeed decaying, is the economic system to blame?

Novak readily concedes that our country suffers from moral underdevelopment. But he refuses to lay the blame at the feet of the economy. Quite the contrary:

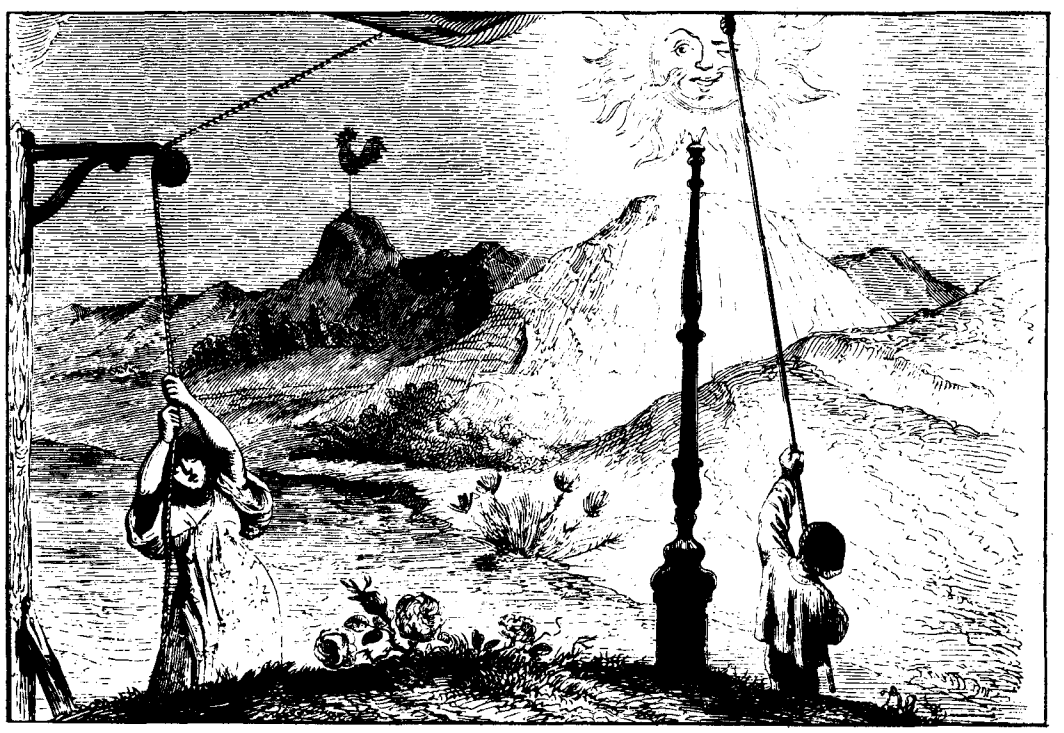
> Democratic capitalism suffers from the underdevelopment of guidance for a spiritual life appropriate to its highly developed political and economic life. To some extent, the leaders of our moral-cultural institutions must accept the blame. They have too often been followers, arriving breathless on battlefields only in time to erect monuments.

True enough; theologians and other social critics in this country have been inexplicably blind to the virtues of their nation and especially of their economy. But is that entirely their own fault? Time and again, the defenders of capitalism respond to criticism with hard-headed pragmatism, avoiding any involvement in moral or ethical questions. So people who have not studied the question carefully come to assume that capitalism can be defended *only* on pragmatic grounds, never on its own ethical posture. Outside the limited range of the libertarian tradition, few Americans have heard moral arguments in favor of capitalism.

Michael Novak himself is a case in point. As he explains in his Introduction, he started out his career as a typical liberal moralist, contemptuous of capitalism and all its pomps. Only gradually, as he matured and as he studied social questions in more detail, did he come to appreciate the immense spiritual resources of the democratic-capitalist system. He did not encounter any memorable books that fired his youthful idealism with love for the system. Instead, he learned at the fountainhead of experience.

Anyone schooled in scholastic philosophy, with its heavy Aristotelian overtones, appreciates the importance of experience as a mentor. Once again, if a system works in practice, the underlying theory must be basically sound. Since he had never seen that theory adequately set forth, Novak took the job upon himself.

Any such ground-breaking work inevitably has its flaws; pioneers do not blaze



*Simon and Schuster, $17.50.

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neat, straight trails on their first expeditions. In *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism,* the main structural flaw is a function of the author's own intellectual history. Michael Novak is a trained theologian, an ex-radical, and a social critic with substantial experience in practical politics. And like most authors, he writes for an audience of people like himself. Unfortunately, very few such people exist. Since Novak is also a very skillful writer, the problem is not overwhelming; his argument is clear to the ordinary reader. But is this book intended to convince his erstwhile radical compatriots, or to enliven his new-found capitalist allies? Is it aimed to train theologians for economic analysis, or to make economists appreciate theological questions? Chapter by chapter, Novak switches focus from one front to the other. (No doubt this problem was aggravated by the author's hectic schedule; this book was obviously written in numerous discrete bursts, rather than one concentrated period.)

But then, who *should* be the audience for this book? Novak is arguing precisely that there *is* no single authority to judge the virtues of a social system. Economists, politicians, and theologians can not only learn a great deal from one another, but also leave each other supreme each within his own realm. More than that; economists, politicians, and theologians alike can respect the competing claims of rivals within their own fields of expertise. This sense of pluralism, which Novak identifies as the single most vital ingredient of democratic capitalism, makes it difficult to judge American society according to any one exclusive perspective.

Tocqueville recognized within the American democracy a plethora of informal governing structures. When the government steps aside from a controversial question, a host of competing claims arise to regulate it. The force of public opinion exerts a powerful, subtle influence to control citizens' behavior. Mediating social structures such as families, schools, churches, neighborhoods, and corporations generate their own systems of rules, spoken and unspoken. Centers of power spring up and fade away without ever formally entering into the political process. Amid this web of governing influences, the power of formal government is less important.

Such a pluralist system is possible only when the legitimate claims of the sovereign government are carefully, deliberately circumscribed. Only a limited government—a republic—can allow the growth of such competing structures to determine the path of the society. Democratic government, in itself, provides no guarantees that pluralism will flourish; it is at least conceivable that an authoritarian regime could be installed by a strictly democratic vote. In one sense, then, Novak might have been more accurate by labeling our system as one of republican, rather than democratic, capitalism. (In fact, the author has confessed privately that he considered the title *The Spirit of the Commercial Republic.*) But while it would be technically more accurate, such an approach would be less truthful to the argument Novak constructs. From his perspective, the main virtue of our political system is, clearly, its attention to the will of the people. Or, to be still more accurate, the individual person.

A republic, however limited its scope, thrives on a common, consensual agreement about the limits of government. It does not enter into discussion about the questions outside those limits. And yet those questions—about sin and salvation, life and death—must somehow be discussed. Ordinarily, there is an unspoken cultural presumption about the republic's philosophical underpinnings. As Peter Berger expresses the problem, governments exist underneath a "sacred canopy" provided by the cultural understanding in which they are found. But Novak seeks to go one step further toward individual autonomy, allowing each person to investigate his own approach to the ultimate truths of human existence. Thus, in his ideal society even this one "sacred canopy" can be somehow confining.

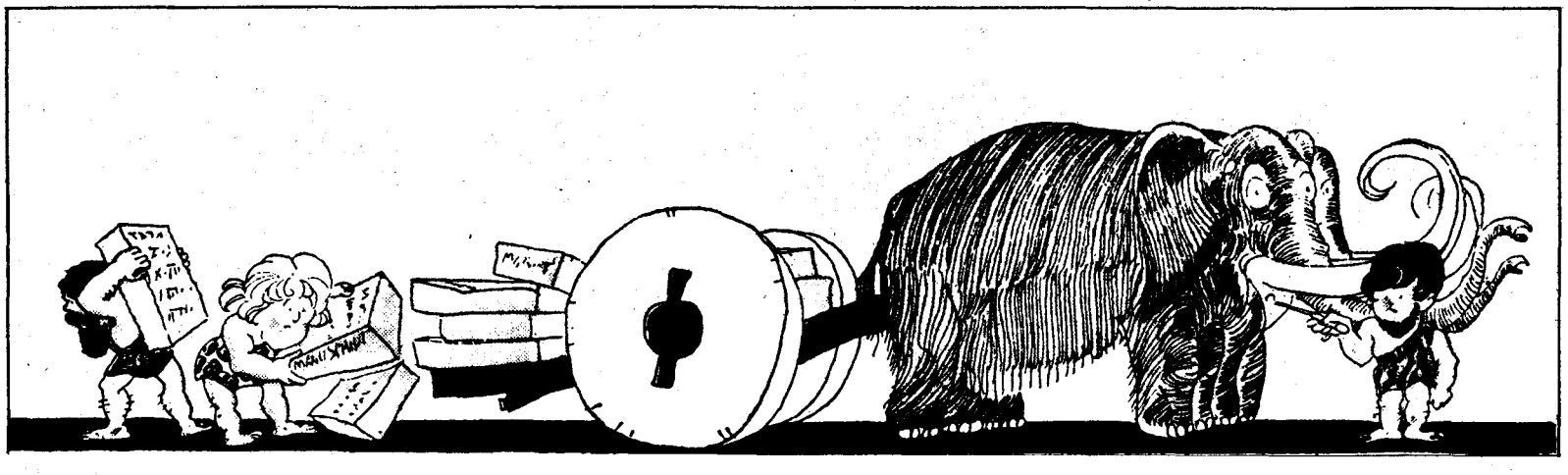
In a genuinely pluralistic society, there is no one sacred canopy. *By intention* there is not. At its spiritual core, there is an empty shrine. That shrine is left empty in the knowledge that no one word, image, or symbol is worthy of what all seek there. Its emptiness, therefore, represents the transcendence which is approached by free consciences from a virtually infinite number of directions.

Democratic capitalism allows each individual to be the sexton within his own shrine. But it is an *empty* shrine. Hence the persistent arguments that capitalism is an amoral system. If the individual chooses to leave his shrine empty, democratic capitalism will not dissuade him from leading an utterly meaningless life. If he chooses to put the Almighty Dollar on the altar of his shrine, democratic capitalism will not stop him; he may pursue any false god, and indulge in any fetishistic rites, undisturbed by the society around him.

Novak purposely constructed his argument to accept this criticism, in order to allow himself a more powerful retort. Yes, democratic capitalism does allow immorality. But in allowing for that danger, it sets up a much more exciting possibility for truly moral behavior. Following John Courtney Murray, Novak argues that moral acts are made possible only by moral choices, and so the range of moral choice increases the potential for active moral behavior. A eunuch derives no moral credit for his celibacy: When there is no choice, there is no morality. By increasing the individual's realm of discretion, democratic capitalism increases his opportunities for constructive spiritual commitments.

Does this approach make moral behavior any more or less likely? During the second Vatican Council, the bishops issued a Constitution on Religious Freedom, explaining the vital importance of that fundamental liberty. The necessity for such freedom arose, the Church explained, not because the faith did not furnish absolute truths, but because those truths could only be grasped by a free act of faith. True faith, like true morality, cannot be compelled. Following the same logic, Novak reasons that society cannot actually promote moral behavior. Of course, the leaders of the moral-cultural realm can exhort people on to higher spiritual planes, but in the last analysis it is the individual, choosing among his available options, who decides his own spiritual fate.

So Novak takes the bold step of envisioning a society in which each individual is free to worship at his own shrine. If he chooses to join with others in their religious worship, he is free to do so; society will not compel him. Fair enough. But Novak goes further still, explicitly stating that the shrine is *empty*. Is that



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truly necessary? Does our society not possess at least some minimal body of common faith? If America's moral fabric is defined by the Judeo-Christian tradition—and it is—is it fair to theorize about a situation in which each individual chooses his own moral postulates?

And suppose the shrine really *is* empty Is an empty shrine any more valuable, spiritually, than an empty barn? Is it not imperative that society alert people to the existence of the shrine, and the need to construct sound moral ideals? Certainly the moral-cultural leaders should not be permitted to impose their own beliefs on the other individuals, but they should have the power at least to make people notice their spiritual needs.

In his memorable Harvard address, Solzhenitsyn suggested that in fact our moral leaders had lost their ability to guide us, and that American society was losing its soul amid its material plenty. If this is indeed the case, then there is all the more reason for spiritual leadership to address itself to the question of the empty shrine and the necessity that each individual address himself to moral questions. If Solzhenitsyn is correct, then our religious leaders have a problem far more fundamental than their inability to construct a theology of economics.

In fairness to Novak, one must hasten to say that in his view democratic capitalism does not leave the shrine completely empty. Our society recognizes the "unalienable rights" of its people and limits the scope of the government's power in recognition of each individual's sacred freedoms. Thus, "humans are not, in the end, fully plumbed by the institutions in which they dwell . . . .Democratic capitalism respects this transcendence by limiting its own reach."

Not coincidentally, it is the unfettered imagination of the autonomous individual that furnishes the productive power of capitalism. By allowing the maximum of individual freedom, and allowing each person to follow his own private dreams, capitalism unleashes the most productive powers known to any economic system. Again, the miracle is made possible by expanding the realm of individual choices. Productivity, like morality, burgeons when it is not forced. Ultimately, as George Gilder has pointed out, productivity is itself a product of faith—faith not only in God but also in the future and in man's capacity to decide his own fate.

As he develops this thesis, Novak sheds some light on an entirely different question: the nature of American conservatism in particular and the American experience in general. Until quite recently, America did not have a distinctive conservative political tradition. Novak complains, at several different junctures, that some American conservatives have been as cool toward capitalism as their liberal adversaries. In that respect, American traditionalists reflect the influence of their cousins on the Continent, whose hostility toward the free market can be traced back for generations, to the beginnings of the industrial revolution and the demise of the aristocracy. In Europe, the distinction between liberal and conservative, Whig and Tory, reflects a history of intellectual battles never fought on these shores.

By the same token, the American political tradition embraces a perspective on human freedom and initiative that Europeans do not readily grasp. European conservatives (and their traditionalist allies on these shores) often forget that America never nourished an aristocracy of its own, and consequently the American drive toward social mobility does not include any admixture of contempt for existing social institutions. Similarly, European liberals (and their libertarian friends here) neglect the fact that within a democratic social structure Americans have always nourished a hierarchy of shared social values. Democratic capitalism, as practiced in this country, neither challenges nor endorses the social order. It *is* the social order. The American experience has been a social experiment, as our Founding Fathers recognized it would be. Now, after two centuries of empirical evidence, we are able to draw some solid conclusions about the results of that experiment. The American conservative tradition, at its distinctive best, insists that the experiment has proved successful.

With *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, Michael Novak emphatically joins the chorus of this American conservative tradition. In fact, his effort clearly involves a desire to do for twentieth-century America what Thomas Aquinas did for thirteenth-century Europe—to devise a philosophical and theological system within which the entire society can be judged. Many writers, both good and bad, have assessed American democracy and American capitalism as political and economic systems. Novak sets out to assess democratic capitalism as a system for moral growth—a plan for salvation, or, at least, a plan within which the individual can achieve his own salvation.

Contemporary American society is not as cohesive as that of medieval Europe, and Michael Novak is not a philosopher of the stature of Thomas Aquinas. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* does not provide a full guide to a moral appreciation of our society. Novak never fully engages the arguments of Solzhenitsyn, and of others who wonder whether freedom and faith are fully compatible. There is a tremendous amount of work left to be done, exploring the successes and failures of the American experiment.

But whatever its faults and its omissions, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* grasps the most important points about American culture and society. Our economy, like our polity, is nourished by a common faith and freedom. Democracy and capitalism do not exist in a vacuum; they spring out of a cultural setting that both defines and limits them. Today, our society's weaknesses stem not so much from political or economic failures, but from the growing weakness of the culture that sustains the socio-political system. To rehabilitate our society, we must first restore the moral force of our cultural understanding.

Capitalism works; the historical record makes argument on that point impossible. But if it cannot command the assent of the moral-cultural realm, capitalism cannot survive. Democracy, too, works; but not without the citizens' recognition of the obligations it entails. The most crucial component of any social system is its moral legitimacy, and it is the moral legitimacy of our system that Michael Novak addresses. □

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Robert D. Novak

A CENTRAL AMERICAN JOURNAL

The Novak of Evans & Novak reports *adagio con pessimismo* from San Salvador, Managua, Tegucigalpa, and Guatemala City.

While Communist guerrillas ambushed inept government troops in El Salvador this summer, self-righteous congressmen in Washington complained that collectivization of the land was moving too slowly. The protracted struggle for Central America thus continued indecisively, muting but not extinguishing the cautious optimism set off by the large turnout in last spring's Salvadoran elections. That defiance of Communist efforts at disruption led gloomy Washington officials to reassess their fears that Central America was lost. In Salvador, the guerrillas were licking their wounds while a *de jure* government took power. This coincided with the coming of the first democratically elected government in Honduras, which was proceeding on a sensible course. The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, exporter of subversion to El Salvador and Honduras, now faced its own insurgency creeping across the borders from Honduras. Even hopeless Guatemala seemed to be getting better, with the new military government a marked improvement over its brutal predecessor.

As a veteran of trying to report Vietnam, I was leery of even such modest outbursts of official optimism, so I spent a quick ten days in Central America to shape my own tentative assessment. I was also moved by a broader aim. Influenced in part by Michael Novak's brilliant new book, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, I was looking for signs of Central American interest in a democratic capitalist model instead of the usual authoritarian and Marxist ones.

Miami, May 16. Any trip to Central America begins here, where expatriates abound. I spent the evening before my flight to San Salvador enjoying the hospitality of self-exiled Salvadoran men and women of means (they deeply resent being called "oligarchs"), who prefer Miami to the constant threat of kidnapping and demands on their relatives for ransom. So, they run their businesses by telephone from Miami, make occasional flying trips to Salvador, and dream of the day when they can return.

To my surprise, only one of the expatriates was contemplating a permanent return in the wake of the March 28 elections and that is only because he could no longer stand Florida rather than because of any perceived improvement back home. The expatriates were heartsick that the right-wing victory had been followed by what they considered intervention by Lt. Gen. Vernon (Dick) Walters, U.S. ambassador at large, imposing as president a banker and international technocrat, Dr. Alvaro Magana. But they showed little affinity for the new leader of the Right, ex-army Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson, viewing him as an upstart unqualified for high office.

Over the dinner table, we discussed Chile's system of authoritarian rule mixed with capitalism. The expatriates were divided whether capitalism could flourish under authoritarian rule. Then, a woman who had been silent all evening spoke:

"We have had our elections in El Salvador, and what has happened? Nothing. Things are as bad as ever, maybe worse. Democracy is not the answer."

San Salvador, May 17. There was little of the aura of danger and tension that immediately seized a visitor to Saigon. Few weapons and few troops were in evidence. The deceptive tranquillity was enhanced by the fact that the international press corps no longer infested the Hotel Camino Real but, to the delight of almost everyone, had departed to cover the Falklands War. Still, it soon became clear that nobody of importance goes anywhere without a bodyguard or, better still, a backup car filled with bodyguards.

In contrast to the gloom among the Miami expatriates, the leaders of the new National Republican Alliance (ARENA) were in a state of high excitement, despite the disappointment over Magana (for which they also blame General Walters). They have been allotted the economic portfolios in the three-party coalition government and aim to restore freedom for private enterprise so restricted under the Christian Democratic president, Jose Napoleon Duarte. They believe capitalism has never been given a chance in El Salvador under the heavy hand of church and state.

Guillermo (Billy) Sol, an American-educated (Texas A&M, '52) business executive, typifies the ARENA supporter having his first fling at politics. His arm was in a cast from wounds caused by gunshots fired by unknown assailants (he suspects Christian Democrats, not Communists). But he was expansive about his nation's future. The unexpected flow of campesinos going to the polls to vote ARENA moved him. "For the first time," he said, "I thought democracy could work in this country."

San Salvador, May 18. My first appointment of the day was with the new minister of agriculture, Miguel Muyshondt, another

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Texas Aggie ('56) who is one of ARENA's members of the new government. He told me in an offhand manner that the National Assembly will make "a little change" this very evening in Duarte's agrarian reform bill, making sure landowners can lease small plots of land for the coming growing season without fear of losing title to the land under Section III of the Land Reform Act.

The "little change" in the reform bill proved an immediate threat to the desperately needed flow of U.S. aid. I received a preview from Duarte himself, who seemed happy to be relieved of the burdens of government. Dressed in a blue polo shirt, he held forth in the grimy downtown headquarters of the Christian Democratic Party. The change in the agrarian reform, he told me, "is a sign of the hatred by the extreme Right."

More important than Duarte's political reflex was how the change in the reform affected the two most powerful men in this country: Dean Hinton, the U.S. ambassador, and Gen. Jose Garcia, minister of defense and head of the Army. I would not see Hinton until the next day, but another U.S. diplomat told me that the Embassy was mightily displeased, fearful of the firestorm in Congress.

I did see Garcia at the Army high command that day. This was the man who had responded to Dick Walters's visit by ordering the National Assembly to end its bickering and elect a president (specifically Dr. Magana, whose intense popularity with the military is attributed to years of artificially low-interest loans made by his bank to Army officers). The heavyset Garcia was genial but no more enchanted by the National Assembly's tinkering with the agrarian reform than he was with its previous stalemate over presidential succession. "These politicians are like children with a new toy," he said.

General Garcia, I suspect, cares nothing for land reform. What bothers him is the troublesome workings of representative democracy, much more cumbersome than a junta. Garcia was outraged that essential U.S. military aid in the war against the Communists should be endangered by politicians defying Washington's orders.

That same night, a leading ARENA member invited me to his home for a party, during which I would interview Major D'Aubuisson. But D'Aubuisson was delayed by the National Assembly session on the agrarian reform, and I had ample opportunity to talk to key ARENA figures in the government. They are less stereotypical Latin American authoritarians than acolytes of Milton Friedman. In private conversation, they express fear that the U.S. Embassy and the Army will prevent the rollback of socialist "reform" imposed with Washington's blessing by the Duarte government.

This concern dovetailed with the angry reaction to the U.S. policy in the Falklands that I would hear everywhere on my trip. "You cannot trust the gringos," one of the government's leading figures told me.

D'Aubuisson, accused by his enemies of leading right-wing "death squads" in years past, arrived in the flush of victory from the National Assembly vote. He is short, slim, intense, and looking perhaps a little older than his 38 years. For our interview, he peeled off his suit coat, revealing an automatic pistol stuck in his belt. He exudes charisma but may have been less than prudent in criticizing Ambassador Hinton and General Garcia for interfering with the National Assembly.

D'Aubuisson is committed to economic freedom—and perhaps democracy as well. Though he praised Chile's economic system, he said "well, that's another matter" when asked about the Chilean political system. Like other Salvadoran conservatives, he seemed baffled that the Reagan Administration continued to press hard for the confiscation and collectivization of land. Still, he has become enough of a politician to understand that, however economically desirable, estates cannot be restored to the big landowners. "Positively not," he said.

San Salvador, May 19. President Magana, a worldly technocrat who speaks excellent English, saw me alone at the Presidential Palace without aide, interpreter, or recording device present (the only other chief of state to do so with me during the past 20 years was Ronald Reagan). He sees himself as a transitional president, neither retreating on past land confiscations nor advancing on new ones. He, like everyone else in the government, felt the guerrillas incapable of a major new offensive any time soon and was laying plans for a "peace committee" (including D'Aubuisson) to offer amnesty to the rebels and perhaps start negotiations.

I lunched with Ambassador Hinton, a senior foreign service officer who is on a first-name basis with Secretary of State Alexander Haig and unlike Ambassador Robert White of Carter Administration days is on fairly good personal terms with the Right. Whereas White called D'Aubuisson a "psychopathic killer," Hinton considers him a politician with an unlimited future.

Hinton regards as "stupid" the congressional requirement for periodic certification of the "reforms" that prohibit denationalization of coffee exports, a requirement the Ambassador thinks is desirable. But Hinton embraces the notion of "taking flags from the Communists" so cherished by the State Department—in El Salvador's case, the confiscation and collectivization of private property. That morning he met with leaders of campesino organizations who warned him that the National Assembly's action could reap a bountiful harvest in Communist support.

Several non-party businessmen put the Salvadoran situation in perspective over dinner. The simultaneous nationalization of banking and agriculture by the Duarte regime, linked to the fallen sugar and coffee prices, had produced an economic crisis. But unlike Duarte, Magana called in the private sector to cooperate. Magana had been put in power by what the businessmen called a military coup d' état against D'Aubuisson's National Assembly. It was probably providential; the country was not ready for rule by ARENA. Yet there were signs that the Army, with U.S. backing, might strike again if the National Assembly exercised its mandate.

The irony was unavoidable. The U.S.-supplied Army was necessary to wage the war against the Communist insurrection, but they were fighting the new forces seeking to implant in El Salvador its first seedlings of democratic capitalism.

Tegucigalpa, May 21. On the surface, Honduras is a world away from El Salvador. The Liberal regime elected earlier this year has dispelled Nationalist

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warnings of softness toward Communism and promises to be the nation's first stable democratic government in a generation. There is no insurgency within its borders.

But beneath this surface are the same economic woes and troubles with Washington seen in San Salvador. These were laid out to me by Carlos Flores, the 34-year-old minister of the presidency. Crisply efficient, he waved in my face a copy of a letter to U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte which he described as follows: Washington hounds us to get a democratically elected government, and after two years of bargaining, our urgent request for $35 million in aid remains becalmed in the bureaucracy, while Nicaragua's Comandante Daniel Ortega returns from a flying trip to Moscow with $200 million. To get $85 million needed from the International Monetary Fund, Honduras was being forced to raise taxes. "It is ridiculous," Flores told me. "We need production, not taxes."

This bitterness was eclipsed over lunch with several prominent Hondurans. They were obsessed by events in the Falklands—even liberals with no affection for the junta in Buenos Aires. By a logic I did not entirely understand, they believe the U.S. failure to join the Rio pact in support of Argentina clouds prospects of a united effort against Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua.

The steady armament of neighboring Nicaragua is deeply disturbing to officials here, none more so than Ambassador Negroponte, a one-time aide to Henry Kissinger in the Paris talks on Vietnam. Alone among senior U.S. diplomats I met in Central America, Negroponte perceives the potential trail of fallen dominoes triggered by Nicaragua. Yet there is no U.S. strategy to confront this first Communist presence on the American mainland.

Tegucigalpa, May 22. My eight a.m. meeting with Gen. Gustavo Alvarez, chief of the armed forces, was delayed by the arrival of four Nicaraguan officers who had crossed the border by helicopter in search of asylum. Alvarez is deeply concerned by the Nicaraguan build-up, for which continued Honduran air superiority is the answer. But he denied he wanted sophisticated new U.S. jet aircraft. "Too expensive," he said, adding he would prefer buying Kaffirs from Israel. But that too would require financing from Washington.

The Argentine-trained Alvarez was disconsolate over the U.S. tilt toward Britain in the Falklands, confirming all Honduran doubts about Washington. Falklands War or not, the Argentine presence continues in Honduras, training Hondurans in anti-terrorist action and, clandestinely, training anti-Communist guerrillas. There had been a Honduran-Nicaraguan meeting on the border two days earlier, in which the Sandinista officers curbed their usual arrogance to plead for border control to curb anti-Sandinista guerrillas crossing the border in bands that once numbered in the tens but now were in the hundreds. Alvarez assured me the talks would come to nothing.

I met two of these anti-Sandinista guerrilla leaders later that day in the lobby of the Hotel Maya. Dressed in polo shirts and blue jeans, they could scarcely have been mistaken for high-ranking former Nicaraguan army officers. They impressed me by their lack of bloated claims and admissions of how badly armed they were. But they were growing in number, bringing back more and more recruits from each cross-border raid.

Managua, May 23. There is no *there* in Managua. The ravages of the 1972 earthquake remain, and there is no central section to the city. It lacks the buoyancy of the Hispanic culture. The government-owned Intercontinental Hotel where I stayed is enveloped in gloom, secret police officers reportedly abounding on the staff. It is no longer a deluxe international hotel, the facilities disintegrating as Nicaragua slowly descends into the Third World. The symbol of Managua for me on this Sunday was the Cathedral, never restored after the earthquake, heavy vegetation growing on the floor, and a huge Sandinista flag defacing its exterior.

My first contact here is a businessman, whose story was to be repeated over the next two days. A foe of the Somoza dictatorship, he has been reduced to penury and insolvency by the Sandinistas he had welcomed as deliverers. "We thought there never could be anything worse than Somoza," he said. "We were wrong." He went to great lengths to make it clear that if his name appeared in print he would surely be arrested and imprisoned for a violation of security.

Managua, May 24. My contacts with private citizens reveal this story: Nicaragua is a Communist police state in everything but name. In typical Marxist-Leninist patterns, the "hards" in the Sandinista revolution supplant the "softs"; most recently, the president of the central bank was overridden in attempts for modest incentives for the private sector, and defected on his honeymoon to Panama. Expropriations of private property, especially productive farm land, are accelerating. Only the big enterprises that the Sandinistas *must* keep operating and cannot run themselves—such as the San Antonio sugar operation and the Coca Cola bottling works—are left untouched. All recognize it is merely a stay of execution.

The economic rot in Nicaragua transcends the commodity price deflation plaguing all Central America and derives from the dead economic hand of Communism. The $200 million aid package that so impressed the Honduran officials is viewed here as a Potemkin village of foreign aid—lots of promised equipment, none of the desperately needed foreign exchange.

"I give it two more years," a businessman in his mid-40s told me. "If nothing happens, I leave." But what is expected to happen? These dissidents are not quite sure, but some foresee a Central American war to determine whether this region shall be capitalist or Communist. There is no confidence that the United States would play a major role.

The boyish-looking new U.S. Ambassador, Anthony C. Quainton, has not reassured the regime's dissidents about Washington's intentions. "I think your ambassador is too soft," one key leader in the anti-Sandinista underground said. Filling his second important ambassadorial role at age 41, Quainton is one of the bright young men of the Foreign Service. But he is no

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ideological cold warrior committed to making life unpleasant for the Sandinistas.

Guatemala City, May 26. The culture shock on arriving here is intense. Guatemala City, with its heavy traffic and high-rise skyline, bears no resemblance to decaying Managua and hardly any to the sleepy Guatemalan capital I last visited in 1966. Since the overthrow of the brutal, corrupt military dictatorship two months earlier, the mood has lightened. This is no longer a city of fear where cars stay off the street after dark.

But the biggest, most important country in Central America remains in deep trouble. The astute General Alvarez in Honduras had told me that Guatemala was a markedly more serious problem than El Salvador, and I quickly found him to be correct. Apart from the pervasive economic doldrums, guerrilla activity is uncontrolled, and the government lacks adequate arms and expertise. An impending operation against some 800 guerrillas hard by the Mexican border was going to have to use civilian helicopters.

Gen. Efrain Rios Montt, president of the junta, has taken the position that he needs no U.S. military aid. In an interview with me, though, he suggested that the failure of Washington to help might mean a Communist victory here.

In our meeting at the presidential mansion, Rios Montt subdued the flamboyant Christian evangelism that has been his life the last five years. The young Army officers who brought him to power have been stunned. "They thought they were getting a general, and found they had gotten a preacher," commented one political leader. Rios Montt is Guatemala's first ruler in recent memory who has any rapport with the public, but he obviously has not even the slightest concept of government, especially of economics.

The new U.S. Ambassador, Frederick Chapin, is an old foreign-service hand who helped write the Marshall Plan and is an expert on foreign aid. He is bemused at the infinitesimal trickle of aid permitted because of the past regime's human rights transgressions. Emphasis on human rights is maintained at the middle-level of the State Department by Carter Administration holdovers, but even opponents of this policy in the U.S. Embassy hesitate to restore aid. They do not want Guatemala to be subjected to the same humiliating surveillance by Congress now required for El Salvador.

Gustavo Anzueto, a defeated conservative presidential candidate in the last corrupted election, agrees. He believes that productivity can be achieved only through private incentives, not through the Keynesian planning demanded by both the International Monetary Fund and the State Department. He also believes Guatemala must look for military help not from Washington but from Israel, South Africa, and Argentina. To him, as to the other Guatemalans, the Falklands War underscored the undependability of Uncle Sam.

Washington, May 28. I returned home slightly encouraged by El Salvador but not reassured about the fate of all Central America. In particular, the role of the United States in Central America seems confused, contradictory, committed to no overriding strategy. There is an opportunity to preach democratic capitalism in Central America, but there is no appreciation of this in the U.S. State Department. In Latin America, Uncle Sam is perceived as part of the problem—and the perception is correct. □

John Podhoretz

LANDSCAPE FICTION

John Gardner's shot at The Great American Novel.

In a 1956 piece for *Partisan Review,* Leslie Fiedler, reviewing four new novels, found himself seized by "a depressing desire to sneak out to a movie. How respectable [the novel] has become, how predictable!" Fiedler was writing at a time when there was something disreputable, something delightfully scandalous, about preferring movies to novels. This is, of course, no longer the case, but Fiedler's comment still holds true. Movies with a present-day setting, even if otherwise deceptive and false, cannot help but show us something of "the way we live now," as Anthony Trollope significantly titled one of his novels. But this is precisely what most recent American novels have failed to do.

John Gardner's new novel, *Mickelsson's Ghosts,** is a particularly interesting case in point. Gardner, whose many books include *October Light* (which won the 1977 National Book Critics Circle Award), has written a novel in the grand style—a long, sprawling, intensely serious work that finds its author staring down into the famous abyss. The protagonist, Mickelsson, a distinguished professor of philosophy at the State University of New York at Binghamton, is (as Gardner informs us in a preface) a "lunatic." He talks to himself continually and has been known to dress up in Victorian garb while smearing his face with Indian war-paint. Mickelsson, it seems, has been driven mad by nothing less than the sorry state of mankind in the late twentieth century.

We follow him through the most disastrous year of his life, as he struggles to find a bit of peace. His ex-wife is demanding an alimony settlement that comes to several thousand dollars more a year than he earns. Though flat broke, he buys a beautiful, ramshackle old house which he lovingly restores to its former aristocratic grandeur. The house, however, is haunted; he hears voices all the time and even sees the ghosts of the title. He worries about his children, ruminates over his past life, fantasizes about and enters into a fitful sexual relation with a gorgeous Jewish sociology professor, and is drawn into a search for a document that might delegitimate the Mormon Church. But the major plot strand concerns a teenage prostitute Mickelsson takes up with. The girl becomes pregnant, and Mickelsson, who has a horror of abortion, is forced into a terrifying step to save the life of what may not even be his unborn child.

Though this is an enormously long novel

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*Random House, $16.95.

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by any standard, Gardner has no particular story to tell, not even about Mickelsson's descent into psychosis. Mickelsson is crazy at the beginning of the novel, and despite some moments of razor-like clarity, he remains crazy until the end, when he becomes crazier still. No development here and therefore no story.

Nevertheless, *Mickelsson's Ghosts* might well seem to be a novel about the way we live now. Through the protagonist we confront present-day literature, philosophy, music, politics, and such major issues as abortion. Mickelsson seems to experience everything as an educated stranger to all these things would; his eyes might be the eyes of his intellectual hero (and, eventually, villain), Nietzsche. At certain moments, when Mickelsson comes face to face with things which by now we all take for granted, the book bursts into life. In one particularly dazzling scene, Mickelsson is taken to a recital being given by a dour married couple, the Swissons. To the surprise and delight of everyone but Mickelsson, the concert turns out to be a parody of classical music. Mickelsson is intrigued by this:

> The devices Britt Swisson used in his compositions were mainly of the kind an ordinary, uneducated listener (like Mickelsson) would describe as "noise": discord, scrambled rhythms, an occasional passage of what might have been jazz, another that might have been the slightly "off" thumpings and poopings of a German town band—passages leading nowhere, ripped from their context, not so much "music" properly speaking as fragments of sound, glittering objects from civilization's music dump. . . . were the musician's all-but-universal modern world-sense: the rage and alarm of an accidental consciousness stripped of its comforting illusions . . . [F]or what was the meaning, intentional or otherwise, of Swisson's comic use of devices invented out of anger and fear if it was not mockery of the devices by misapplication, to demonstrate, by mimicking them, how childish they were in their existential wail . . .? Once all pretensions to tragic grandeur were dashed . . . what could be expected but—what else was possible than—a return to good humor, classical sociability in place of the Romantic yawp?

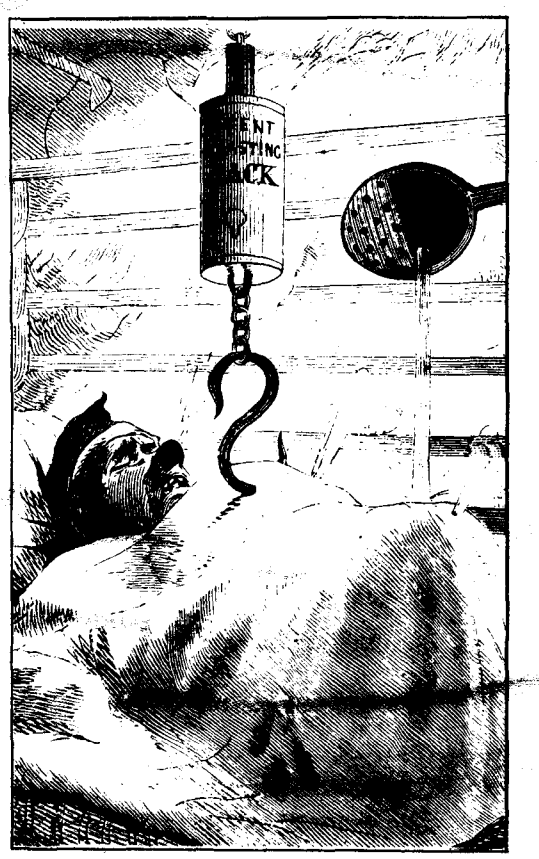
This sort of novelistic essay on a subject as complicated, as alienating, and as difficult as modern music is reminiscent of the kind of thing Trollope himself often did.

The problem is that Gardner, in his effort to describe life in America today, paradoxically tells us both too little and too much. No detail is too small to escape his notice and his rapidly moving pen, whether it is the sound of a car engine when the ignition key is turned, or the color of a hair sticking out of the mole on an old man's neck.

This emphasis on minor detail—detail that never adds up to anything and thus never justifies itself—becomes all the more striking as it dawns on us that there are no *major* details in the novel. Gardner will devote two or three closely printed pages to the various ways Mickelsson repairs a dining-room wall, but gives no more space, no more emphasis, to his dramatically necessary moments. In the most important scene in the novel, Mickelsson furiously breaks down the door of an apartment, causing the man inside—a miser whom Mickelsson has observed through a window fondling an enormous cache of money—to suffer a heart attack. Though Gardner seems consciously to invite comparisons here with the double axe-murder in *Crime and Punishment,* he is completely offhand in his treatment of the episode, as though it had no more significance for the novel and for Mickelsson himself as a character than the replastering of that dining-room wall. To say, as some critics have, that *Mickelsson's Ghosts* rambles is an understatement; the truth is that it suffocates itself with its own detail.

But if Gardner's focus is suicidally microscopic, his reach is much too grandiose. The purpose of *Mickelsson's Ghosts*—a book which is nothing if not ambitious—is to show modern man on the brink of self-destruction. Not one insane professor; not even a particular group of men; but Modern Man himself. Mickelsson, this professor of philosophy, is given to rather obscure meditations on the contributions and failings of various twentieth-century philosophers known only, I am afraid, to enthusiasts of the field. But Gardner fails miserably in translating these abstract interests into concrete dramatic terms.

His terror of nuclear power, for example, is portrayed in a midnight scene when Mickelsson's car is nearly run off the road by 18-wheel trucks without headlights carrying nuclear waste. This rather hackneyed image comes straight out of a Hitchcock movie. It is also symbolically inappropriate. Since Gardner evidently wants to say that we are driving ourselves to destruction by using nuclear power, he might better have made his point by contriving to place Mickelsson behind the wheel of the truck. As with the question of nuclear power, so too with environmental matters: Gardner trots out that old favorite, whale-hunting, in several different conversations. And, silliest of all, Gardner brings in the primitive religious fanaticism that we are incessantly told nowadays threatens us all in the person of a bumbling professor of Medieval Studies. This Thomist somewhat improbably turns out to be a self-appointed member of a Mormon hit squad, and he forces Mickelsson at gunpoint, for reasons that I will not go into because I could not understand them, to take his reconstructed house apart bit by bit in hopes of finding some document. The house, representing Mickelsson's great effort at spiritual regeneration, is destroyed, and when it goes he descends into a psychotic state from which presumably he will never recover.



Modern man, and his world, destroyed by big trucks carrying nuclear waste, whale-hunters, and homicidal Mormons; one realizes with some pleasure that with the slightest shift in emphasis, this novel could be a parody of itself.

Gardner demonstrates intermittently here and in previous novels that he is quite well equipped to describe the way we live now. But despite his obsession with detail and his up-to-the-moment trendiness, he seems to think that the effort is beneath him. He is in quest of some higher truth, driven to large questions which by his own account fascinate him precisely because they are out of his grasp.

Thus in his manifesto, *On Moral Fiction* (1978), Gardner writes: "Art is as original as it is precisely because it does not start out with clear knowledge of what it means to say. . . . The artist composes, writes or paints just as he dreams, seizing whatever swims close to his net." This may describe the infancy and childhood of a work of art, but it does not describe art in its mature state. For in its mature state, a work of art does know what it is saying, and says it clearly—even if what it is saying is in some sense untrue, or wrong, or morally base. And it is the mark of a mature artist that he knows what he can and cannot say, that he knows what he understands and what he does not. Once he learns these things, any good writer who keeps his eyes open and his mind unclouded by political or religious dogma can tell his readers a great deal about the world they share. "Landscape is fiction," Henry James said, and while I think the statement is too narrow to describe his own work or that of any other major writer, it certainly holds for the general run of minor novels. Only a very few novelists have been able to plumb deeper than that, and John Gardner is not one of them. □

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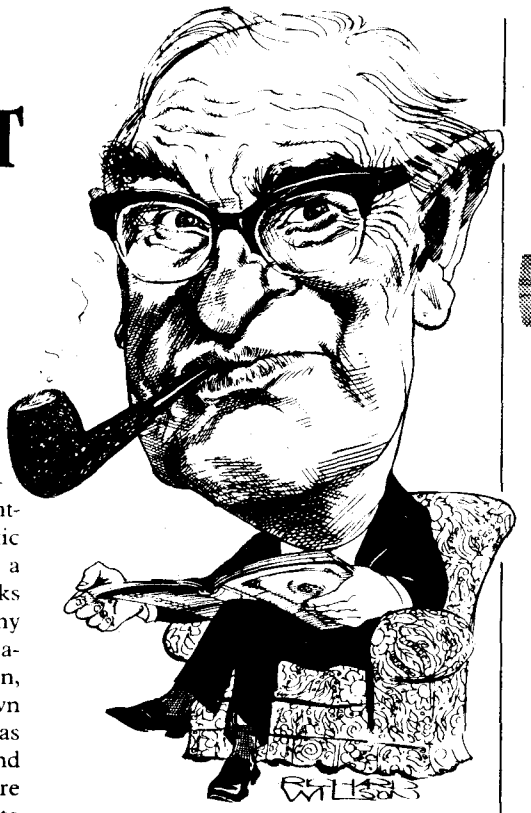
V. S. PRITCHETT on The Folio Society



A year or two ago I overheard a bibliophile mutter 'Reader' with disappointment as he sniffed along my chaotic bookshelves. Of course! Not only a reader, but a re-reader, for a writer's books are the tools of his trade. Most of my books are serviceable: there is the occasional gleam of an elegant production, but there is a lot of the reach-me-down bought out of my wages when I was young, and some – like my French and Spanish, though not my Russian – are getting tatty and my eyesight is not up to the grey print of modern replacements. The sharp decline in so much of our present printing and our binding seems to me one more sign of the decline in the honour in which a literary culture was once held. It is because The Folio Society restores this honour to literature and its authors that I am more than eager to speak for them.

Drawing by Quentin Blake from *Scoop*

When I think of getting a new copy of a book that has been pinched from my shelves – Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* or Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars* for example – I know now where to look for a distinctive edition worthy of the author and of my trade. I am no bibliophile. I do not chase first editions. I want to do the authors honour because they have lasted, whether they are major, minor or eccentric figures. All are links in the chain: no minor writers, no major writers. We learn from one another at random.

My stolen Lermontov, that marvellous Russian short story, *A Hero of Our Time*, seminal to the Russian and indeed European short story, was schoolbookish. In Folio it is elegant but not arty: like all Folio's editions it is intelligently introduced and in this case lithographs by Dodie Masterman evoke the romantic Byronic tale. The Folio volumes have revived and reconsidered the Victorian art of illustration. My Turgenevs were good but small and worn. The Folio edition of his *Fathers and Sons* is graceful, suited to the delicate master of Russian prose, who was above all a man of taste himself; here again the lithographs of János Kass add their comment on the manners of his society. There is also a collection of six Turgenev stories. Five are certainly his best: *The Superfluous Man, Mumu, King Lear of the Steppes, Asya, First Love.* The sixth, Turgenev's last tale, *The Song of Triumphant Love*, has irritated or bewildered many critics, including Richard Freeborn the present translator, who speculates on Turgenev's elderly experiments in the occult and Oriental. To my ear this tale has chiefly a biographical interest: I suspect it of starting as one of those fanciful operettas he used to write as a doubtful compliment to the singer Pauline Viardot who tormented him.

There are finds. Two years ago I needed to look at one of Trollope's short stories, particularly *Lotte Schmidt*, so well spoken of. Impossible to find a copy outside the British Museum, but here it is in the Folio *The Two Heroines of Plumplington*, introduced by Julian Symons. At last, too, I can get Bewick's *My Life:* there is an incurable amateur naturalist in English readers, but I want it for the exquisite engravings. And then there are books one ought to have known and which I know now I shall never read but which some younger maniac might jump at. One tantalises me with the memory of an irrecoverable impulse. I was mad about the Fall of Granada when I was thirteen. I even wrote 150 pages of a novel on the subject at that time. Why didn't I know of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's eyewitness report *The War in Granada?* How sad.

But Folio does strike a balance between the old and the new, the solid and the esoteric. Classics like *Pickwick Papers* and *Our Mutual Friend* need to look new to the taste of later generations; and the great English gift for comedy and satire has its moderns like Stella Gibbons' wicked fun with the rustic novels of the T.F. Powys period, *Cold Comfort Farm*. Like Waugh's *Scoop* and *Black Mischief*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, they deserve their commemoration. In the Twenties, privately-printed editions played an important part in drawing attention to new writing and the established. Folio does this for us now.

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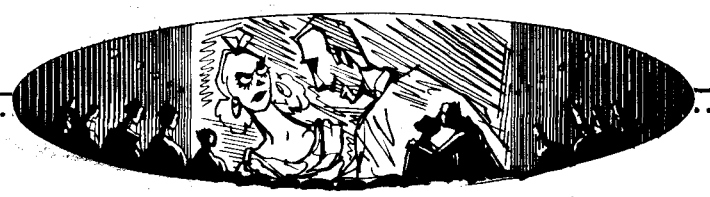

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS

by Martha Bayles

John Irving's *The World According to Garp* is first and foremost a campus novel. Its hero, T.S. Garp, grows up in a New England prep school where his unwed mother is a nurse; then marries the wrestling coach's daughter, who becomes an English professor at a small New England college. By the end of the story they are back at the same prep school, with Garp having taken over as wrestling coach. There is a sojourn in Vienna, but the only people Garp meets there are whores. Whores are a big deal in Irving's novels; they represent real life. Whenever Irving's characters venture off campus, they meet whores, bears, and political fanatics. Occasionally Irving will bring in a benevolent football player or a traveling circus, but for the most part his books deal with a range of experience so narrow it makes *The Preppy Handbook* look like Balzac.

Of course, what is narrow may also be deep. Not so Irving. After five novels, he has perfected his method of shuffling and reshuffling lots of one-dimensional characters—each identified by two or three superficial traits: enough to fit on an index card—and playing out both dialogue and plot as though they were tricks in whist. The only way to tell major from minor characters is to count appearances, and to watch who trumps whom. It's a pretty boring game.

But games are in, especially on campus. Current academic criticism teaches that it is wrong to consider a literary text as referring in any way to the world. At places like the University of Iowa, where Irving studied creative writing, there are no more novels and stories—only "fictions." And a fiction is a self-enclosed, self-referential structure that can be evaluated only by the latest, most arcane mode of formalistic analysis—which is itself a fiction. Some of these fictioneers, as I like to call them, have remained on campus so long they have moved past the point of obliterating meaning in literature, and have taken up denying that language makes sense or that life exists outside the workings of their minds.*

John Irving probably doesn't understand the obscure machinations of critics like Jacques Derrida and Frank Kermode, but he does seem to have picked up enough of the lore to end his most recent novel, *The Hotel New Hampshire*, with these lines: "So we dream on. Thus we invent our lives . . . we dream on and on. . . . And our dreams escape us almost as vividly as we can imagine them." The reader who takes this as a profound observation on existence will do well to consider its source, which is not the original genius of John Irving but English Department cant. The world we get from Irving is not according to a truly imagined character named Garp. It is according to what Irving has been taught: that a fictioneer is most authentic when he has nothing to say about nothing.

Obviously, if Irving fully achieved this ideal, his works might be a smash at *TriQuarterly*, but they wouldn't top the best-seller list or get made into movies. For commercial success he needs a message which can get across in spite of those playful deconstructionist touches signaling the difference between *poesis* and *mimesis*. If his millions of readers enjoy or put up with Irving's literary game, it is probably because they find in it some residue of meaning. And anyone wishing to enlarge this audience still further—say, to a number commensurate with box-office success—must therefore locate that residue and communicate it through the more naturalistic medium of film.

To say that the director of *Garp*, George Roy Hill, and screenwriter, Steve Tesich, succeeded is at best a partial compliment. Except for a couple of fantasy sequences, one of them nicely animated, the movie seems to have done away with the novel's only strength, which is ingenuity. At least the novel's flat characters are cleverly arranged to prop each other up. In the film this house-of-cards effect is inevitably replaced by flesh-and-blood actors, the mere sight of whom leads us to expect more development and depth. But aside from giving Garp emotions about his dead father—which he lacks in the novel—the film makers might as well have used cardboard. It's particularly frustrating to see Robin Williams so squelched, since even on TV's inane "Mork and Mindy" he demonstrates more wit, intelligence, and zany spunk than a dozen John Irvings.

Yet in terms of conveying the message, I think the film does succeed. My problem is that I don't like the message. Joseph Epstein has described Irving's readership as "young urban professionals," "with a bit of the hippie-dippie counter-culture clinging to them still—yuppies . . ." To me they seem not so much urban as campus-oriented, having spent many years at school. Basically they are the sixties generation, now comfortably settled into middle-class domesticity, but unwilling to call such a life-style by its right name. They are not the activist remnant—in fact, Irving makes a point of ridiculing political crusaders. *Garp* fans are rather the great mass of backsliders: the majority who by sixties standards have gone straight, but who hate to admit it. What Irving does is embellish, politicize, and romanticize the choices these people have made, so that the choices appear more unconventional than they really are.

As a hero of this audience, Garp gets credit for having invented the joys of family life. He is a typical member of the sixties generation in that he has turned his attention inward toward marriage and children—preoccupations which, needless to say, he shares with his straight, middle-class neighbors. But unlike

*Not an exaggeration. I refer the reader to Gerald Graff's *Literature Against Itself* (1979) for a lucid discussion of recent critical dementia.

Martha Bayles is film critic of The American Spectator.

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his neighbors, he manages to be self-righteous about it. Thanks to the pervasive influence of feminism, many graduates of the sixties consider themselves to be enjoying a reformed and enlightened domestic bliss, in contrast to all those sexists out there who have not yet learned to hug their kids or stop beating their wives.

In the film, Garp's smugness is conveyed by an episode in which he hires a babysitter so he and his wife can sit outside in the car and gaze at their own children through the window. Child worship is such a stereotyped trait of the American middle class that this ought to be a parody, but it isn't. The film makers are doing their job, faithfully imitating Irving's knack for disguising Garp's middle-class concerns with a cloak of eccentricity.

When a plumber's truck drives too fast down Garp's quiet street, he runs after it and remonstrates with the driver. And earlier, he buys a house right after an airplane has crashed into it, on the grounds that it has been "pre-disastered." What could be more conventional than this worrisome protectiveness? Yet again, the work of camouflage takes place, separating Garp's anxieties from those of his neighbors. The disasters that strike the Garp family are unusual, to say the least: Both his mother and he are assassinated by anti- and pro-feminist extremists. Feminism is the only live issue in Irving's campusy little world: There is no hint of the real dangers that real middle-class people worry about. This omission enables the audience to applaud Garp's sensitive, nurturing instincts while still disparaging the sort of parents who are uptight about drugs, sex, crime, or racial violence.

Garp's fear, however, is convincing. It is not necessary to be a member of the post-sixties crowd to share Garp's anxious hovering over his loved ones. Foreboding, in fact, is one of the few genuine emotions that the film and the novel both successfully evoke. Unfortunately Irving's cure for anxiety is a mode of expression which most of his audience would presumably reject: gratuitous violence against strangers. Like his mother, who in the novel fends off an amorous soldier by slicing his arm to the bone with a surgical scalpel, Garp enjoys the occasional taste of blood. In the film he smashes the plumber's tail lights with a crowbar, and relishes the grisly fate of his wife's rejected lover, whose penis is bitten off in a freak car accident. From the chewing off of a dog's ear to elaborate fantasies of rape, revenge, and mutilation, *Garp* is chock full of attacks and counterattacks. The war between the sexes is depicted as raging so hotly that Garp's mother must convert the old family mansion into a sort of field hospital. Judging from the number of female casualties who turn up, there must be a lot of hostile males out there just waiting to do to Garp's women and children what they've already done to their own. For liberated householders, it's hip to be paranoid.

As a conscious statement about feminism, *Garp* is equivocal. First it sets up a group of zealots: women who have cut out their own tongues to protest the rape of a child named Ellen James. Then it has Ellen James reappear and repudiate such dreadful goings-on. Garp becomes her spokesman, since she too is tongueless. But the odd thing about the debate is that nobody says much of anything, except that the human race would be better off without the twin evils of rape and linguectomy.

But *Garp* is about feminism, make no mistake. Feminism is the route, for Irving and for his audience, which

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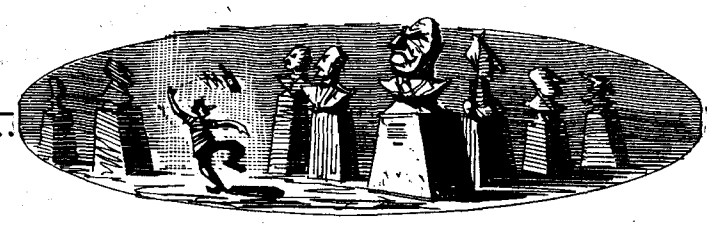
leads away from politics and into private life. Which would be all right except that it also provides them with an excuse to regard their nesting instincts as ideologically and morally superior to those of other people. The sixties generation, I'm sure, is captivated by the opening sequence of the film, which shows an adorable baby floating up through the air to the strains of "When I'm Sixty-Four," by the Beatles. The song is a gentle, ambivalent mockery of middle-class domesticity, English-style. Gentle because it echoes an old music-hall tune; ambivalent because while distancing itself from the bourgeois life, it also suggests that some day even the Beatles might be sixty-four. It's an appealing beginning, but the song itself is too straightforward and honest to reflect a state of mind as convoluted and hypocritical as the one celebrated in *Garp*. □



EMINENTOES

THE MOST HAPPY FELLA

by Karl O'Lessker

One thing I can't stand is a goddamned bleeding heart.

—Nelson A. Rockefeller

Why was Nelson Rockefeller never nominated for the presidency by his own party? One correct answer is that his political and personal behavior made him unacceptable to the great majority of Republican activists outside the upper Northeast. But that still leaves us to ask *why* this lifelong Republican, inheritor of one of the major American fortunes, hardliner on law and order, bitter opponent of Communism in all its forms, passionate advocate of U.S. military supremacy—why such a man was so ill-regarded by the rank-and-file of the party whose principles these attitudes represent.

One of the many merits of Joseph E. Persico's new book, *The Imperial Rockefeller,** is that it gives us plenty of evidence with which to fashion answers for ourselves. Mr. Persico suggests several of his own. Others occur to me. And I have no doubt that those who read the evidence thoughtfully will come up with still others.

It is not, at any rate, a trivial question. Nelson Rockefeller's failure to achieve what may have been his life's highest ambition tells us a great deal about the nature of political power in America, about the Republican party, about the uses and limits of wealth in elective politics, and about the remarkable personality of Rockefeller himself.

*Simon and Schuster, $16.50.

Karl O'Lessker is a senior editor of The American Spectator *and professor of public and environmental affairs at Indiana University.*

I should note, however, that while the book is much more than a set of answers to the question of why its subject never became President, it is not, as the subtitle misleadingly claims it is, a biography. Mr. Persico comes closer to characterizing it accurately in the Preface when he calls it "a personal memoir based largely on the eleven years from 1966 to 1977 during which I worked for Nelson Rockefeller as his principal speech writer . . . I recount essentially what I knew and was a part of. I have refreshed my recollections with the help of colleagues who were closest to him." And that is all. Only 32 of the book's 300 pages of text deal with the pre-1966 Rockefeller. The author did no burrowing through archives; no extended interviews with any of the thousands of people outside the staff who were involved with Rockefeller in politics, business, or personal affairs; no effort to provide a detailed account of the major policy initiatives of those last eleven years in office; nor, finally, is there so much as a single footnote or bibliographical citation.

But it is nevertheless one of the most incisive and revealing *portraits* of a major political figure of our time. Persico accomplishes this through the accumulated power of hundreds of finely judged brushstrokes—Rockefeller rearranging the furniture in a motel room, instructing a waitress on how to serve coffee, publicly humiliating a senior staff member or impulsively giving a work of art to another, sheepishly accepting a rep-

rimand from his young mistress or taking another man's wife for his own and damning the political costs; his cold narrow eyes growing even smaller and more menacing when a distinguished counselor dares suggest a lack of enthusiasm for some whacky new scheme.

"He combined the supreme assurance of the wellborn with the tenacity and cunning of a self-made man," Persico remarks at one point. His temperament, in a word, was truly imperial and he was able to add to this an awesomely dominating presence. "When he entered a room, he sucked up all the authority," recalled one high-ranking state official. His top aides were people of great ability, Persico remarks, "forceful figures in their own spheres, but something went out of them in his presence . . . Never in eleven years did I witness a staff member take him head on. No one ever said flatly, 'I disagree.'"

These qualities were reflected in his style of policy making. Once an idea—from whatever source derived—struck his fancy, he pursued it with all his immense personal force and staff resources. A good example of this was his notorious and controversial "drug-pusher law." As originally proposed and only slightly modified before enactment, it mandated life imprisonment without possibility of parole for anyone convicted of dealing in heroin, LSD, amphetamines, methadone, or hashish. The idea for it came to Rockefeller from an acquaintance he was chatting with at a cocktail party, who reported that Japan's low addiction rate was attributable to a policy of life sentences for pushers. That was good enough for Rockefeller. With no further consultation with anyone he announced it to his staff as a major

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legislative initiative for the coming year and overrode their startled objections with a degree of brutality uncommon even for him.

In this as in other policy areas Rockefeller qualified as a hard-right conservative. Certainly he was a visceral anti-Communist, gravely dubious about the possibility of any true détente with the Soviet Union and one of the bitter-end supporters of the American effort in Indochina. ("You can say what you want about Dick Nixon," he declared to his staff at the time of Cambodia. "But the man sure is a patriot.")

And if the Draconian drug-pusher law was one good measure of his stance on law-and-order issues, his handling of the Attica prison riot was another. The loss of 39 lives seemed to him a small price to pay for putting down what he always believed to have been, in Persico's words, "no isolated, spontaneous prison revolt but a manifestation of the international terrorist conspiracy."

On other issues, though, Rockefeller fully deserved his dismal standing among conservatives. For one thing he was preeminently a Big Government man. Are there social problems to be solved? Let government—especially one headed by Nelson Rockefeller—solve them. And never mind the cost. So it was, for example, that he presided over the most massive explosion in higher education in any state's history, turning "a string of small teachers colleges [into] a university of 235,000 full-time students on seventy-two campuses, the largest system of higher education in the world."

On health care, too, he was as liberal as a Kennedy. Declaring that "access to good health care ought to be regarded as a basic human right," he tried repeatedly to get the state legislature to enact a system of universal health insurance. And at one point he seized upon the new Medicaid program to provide one out of every four New Yorkers with free medical care.

But for many conservatives the most inflammatory and unforgivable of Rockefeller's policy positions was his unstinting support for abortion-on-demand. After first (1968) urging the legislature to adopt a moderate liberalizing of the tough anti-abortion statute then on the books, he gladly signed into law a far more permissive 1970 bill. And then two years later when the Assembly tried to reverse itself, he vetoed the attempted repealer with a slap at those who try "to impose their vision of morality on an entire society."

Reason enough, then, for conservatives to loathe him. But his stands on abortion and socialized medicine came to public notice long after he had established himself as a hated figure among mainstream Republicans. "Politically," insists Persico, "Nelson Rockefeller was hanged for the wrong crime. Three times his party denied him its presidential nomination largely because of his perceived liberalism. It was a bum rap."

But was it? Here is Persico's own analysis:

> Liberals have been defined as those who believe in the efficacy of government action, and conservatives as those who do not. By this simplistic measure, Nelson Rockefeller . . . would qualify as a liberal, indeed. He could not keep his hands off anything. Was the privately owned Long Island Railroad collapsing? Have the state buy it. Were private colleges having financial difficulties? Give them state aid. Did businessmen shun ghettos? Create a Job Incentives Board to attract them. Are cars dangerous? Build a model safety automobile. But he was an activist, not an ideologue. If a problem exists, you attack it. If you lack the authority, pass a law. If you lack the machinery, create an agency. If you lack the resources, raise taxes, sell bonds. But, do something. He directed this compulsion to act, however, almost as easily toward conservative as well as [sic] liberal objectives.

To which, one suspects, any anti-Rockefeller conservative would respond: Q.E.D. And I would add: That account of Rockefeller's "non-liberalism" would have applied admirably to an earlier New York governor, Franklin Roosevelt—who, by the way, as President gave Rockefeller his first government job and remained ever thereafter a role-model for the younger man.

But the pre-1966 conservative hostility to Rockefeller wasn't entirely policy-based. For one thing, there was his long-established record as an "Eastern internationalist" and his association with the hated Dewey wing of the party. And then his first campaign for the presidential nomination, in 1959, pitted him against the conservatives' favorite, Vice President Richard Nixon, and included what Persico calls "a stinging indictment of his own party's national Administration."

And if this wasn't enough, late in 1961 he cast aside his wife of 31 years, the mother of his five children, in order to marry a younger woman who was herself married and the mother of four children. This may seem a mere peccadillo by today's standards, but in the early 1960s it provoked immense outrage.

The final enormity of Rockefeller's pre-1966 career was of course his attempt to take the presidential nomination from the single most beloved conservative of the decade, Senator Barry Goldwater. It is almost impossible now to recapture the sense of spluttering rage so many Republicans felt toward this Eastern-internationalist-Big-Government-moral-degenerate trying to perpetrate so monstrous an act. Nor was his standing with the party much improved in the succeeding months when he all but repudiated the Goldwater candidacy, refusing to campaign outside New York and even there not endorsing the Arizonan.

Rockefeller himself always professed to believe that there were two main reasons why he had never won a presidential nomination. One was the nature of the Republican party. An Argentine journalist once asked him, "Why were you never elected your country's president?" He replied: "I was in the wrong party." And in answer to a similar question on another occasion, he raised his eyebrows and said, "Have you ever been to a Republican convention?"

The other reason, in his own view, was that he hadn't wanted it badly enough. Shortly before he died he remarked to members of his staff, "So, if I really wanted to be President that bad, I should have done what [others did], and that is take two or three years and just concentrate on the science of how to influence and get the contacts to get the votes. Frankly, my interest is more in doing things than it was in that." And to a magazine interviewer he said, "I did not have a sufficient singleness of purpose and sufficient ambition to put everything else aside to do just that." When, asked the interviewer, did you lose that singleness of purpose? "I never had it."

And yet Rockefeller also once said, "I always took it for granted I'd be President. It was always there, in the back of my mind." Is there a contradiction here? Not, I think, if we give due weight to the imperial cast of his mind, blinding him to the necessity of doing what lesser men had to do to win a presidential nomination. He simply refused to believe, says Persico, that the leader of the "Western World would be chosen on the strength of who had attended the most Lincoln Day dinners, who had been most solicitous about the Yates County chairman's hernia operation, or whose agents had captured control of an obscure town committee."

That is a view of presidential nominating politics born not of experience and analysis but of contempt. It is testimony to his inability to comprehend that even Nelson Rockefeller had to play the game according to the rules. □

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SUMMERTIME FOLLIES

by Fred Barnes

Nothing puts the press on guard like special pleading from an interest group—except when that interest group is the press itself. Hysteria, paranoia, tendentious reasoning, all are routinely skewered by reporters when some special interest—a professional or business organization, say—displays them. But when the press or one of its representatives or trade groups indulges in the same, the instinct to skewer is not-so-mysteriously stilled.

How would the press respond, for instance, if doctors claimed that an adverse court ruling now made it financially impossible to treat the lame and the halt? With great skepticism, to say the least. Yet a claim of the same questionable ilk has emerged in the aftermath of the $2.05 million libel verdict last July against the *Washington Post* and been treated with reverence. The claim: that the press, now that the *Post* has been zinged financially, will be so fearful of costly libel judgments that it will shy away from tough investigative reporting which might touch the rich and powerful in America, precisely those who can afford to pursue libel suits.

The ruling against the *Post* came on a suit by William P. Tavoulareas, the president of Mobil Oil Company, and his son, Peter. They charged that stories in the *Post* in 1979 had wrongly indicated that the father used Mobil funds to establish the son in an oil shipping firm. The six-member jury—*Post* attorneys had asked for trial by jury, not by judge alone—awarded the senior Tavoulareas $250,000 in compensatory damages and $1.8 million in punitive damages. The award, the *Post* reported, was "the largest ever against the newspaper."

Naturally, the usual sources were rounded up to denounce the verdict. "Upon learning of the verdict, lawyers who specialize in defending the media in libel cases said they think juries are increasingly willing to punish the press for its conduct through large punitive damage awards, which could in the long run affect the media's willingness to investigate and report on complex stories," the *Post* said in its account of the jury's decision. "We could move to a new level of low-risk journalism," said Floyd Abrams, a New York lawyer who represents the *New York Times* and NBC. "Shocking and disturbing," echoed the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. " . . . These verdicts only serve to discourage the news media from thoroughly investigating the questionable practices of government and large corporations."

The *Times* itself went further in an extraordinary follow-up story. "Although it could be just a singular example involving just one newspaper or one jury, the $2.05 million libel verdict . . . against The Washington Post Company has sent shock waves through the journalism profession," the *Times* said. Clearly, it didn't think the "shock waves" were unwarranted. "Coming in the wake of the $1.8 million judgment won by Carol Burnett, the actress, in her suit against the National Enquirer, and a jury's $26.5 million award, later reduced by a judge to $14 million, in a suit by a former Miss Wyoming against Penthouse magazine, The Post's legal defeat has touched [off] worrying among journalists that it may be growing more hazardous to publish criticism of rich and powerful people." Not a single journalist was quoted, though. Maybe they were still numb from being struck by shock waves.

The oddest story came a week later in the *Post,* written by reporter Kenneth Bredemeier, whose daily coverage of the 21-day trial was excellent. Four of the six jurors, he reported, had initially wanted to decide the case in favor of the *Post,* only to cave in later under pressure from two other jurors. "I think it was the wrong decision," an unnamed juror was quoted as saying. "It's been worrying me and worrying me."

With the exception of the juror's story, all this is standard procedure when a court decision or legislative measure threatens the privileged status of the press. True, there are some legitimate threats, such as the growing inclination of judges to bar reporters from their courtrooms. But there aren't many. And there is nothing to justify the sky-is-falling hysteria of groups like the Reporters Committee, whose steering panel includes some of the nation's most well-known and respected journalists.

The committee's approach was vividly displayed in the June-July issue of its publication, *News Media & The Law*: "The First Amendment in Jeopardy," it proclaimed in the headline of its lead editorial. Surveying "ominous developments from the White House, Congress and federal and state courts," the editorial insisted that "only one conclusion is possible: The First Amendment is in jeopardy, imperiled by constant attacks from the Reagan administration, Congress and the courts. Slowly the ability of journalists to gather and report the news is being chipped away by politicians and judges. . . . Ultimately, the public's right to know and be informed about the business of its government and court system is threatened by paternalistic politicians and judges who think they should decide what news citizens should be able to read and hear."

Now consider again if doctors argued that adverse malpractice rulings were slowly chipping away at their ability to heal. Consider how the press would react if doctors argued that it was just too risky to continue ministering to the poor because the pay wasn't enough to balance the possibility of a malpractice suit. Reverently? Respectfully? Not a chance. That's reserved for when the press's own perceived interests are at stake.

• • •

Poor Edwin Meese III, the presidential counselor. As conservative columnists John Lofton and M. Stanton Evans noted over the summer, he has been under attack in the press. In a "Periscope" item in the July 12 issue of *Newsweek,* Meese

Fred Barnes is National Political Reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

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was described as "an insider on the outs," a man who "continues to exasperate other senior Reagan deputies with what they see as Meese's sloppy management of the domestic-policy operation and his insatiable appetite for far-flung speechmaking." The same week, *Time* nailed him, too. "The decline of Reagan's longtime aide stems from several ill-considered decisions, an inefficient management style and a travel schedule that has kept him away from the White House at key moments." In the *Chicago Tribune* on July 4, White House correspondent Steve Neal was even tougher. "White House dissatisfaction with Meese has reached a point where his senior colleagues have discussed forcing him out," Neal reported.

Lofton and Evans were steamed about these stories. "Stinking, rotten, lousy journalism," Lofton fumed, suggesting that a loyal Reaganite was "being stabbed in the back with impunity." Evans wrote that Meese was the victim of "a ritual of destruction" in Washington, a "process" under which "a strong supporter of the President" was being "expertly targeted for removal from the government" through leaks to the press. Meese himself, Evans said, was a genial fellow and team player who was above responding in kind.

Well, the Meese affair isn't quite that simple. Lofton was right in asserting that Meese was being criticized behind his back. And Evans was correct that Meese is a friendly man who doesn't usually play the Washington leak game. But the problem with their knee-jerk defense of Meese is that the attacks, while perhaps exaggerated, are true in many instances.

Meese, after all, *has* lost power. William P. Clark has come to the White House as national security adviser and swiped Meese's responsibility for foreign policy. James A. Baker III, the White House chief of staff, was once Meese's equal, but his aggrandizing tendencies have lifted him to a higher plateau. And Meese has been associated with some unfortunate presidential decisions, notably the fiasco over extending the Voting Rights Act. If Ronald Reagan had endorsed an unaltered, ten-year extension of the act in 1981, it would have passed Congress easily and pleased the civil rights community no end. But Meese was the main White House aide arguing for softening the 1965 act; Congress, given time to think about changes, responded by hardening the act, broadening it in a way that many conservatives believe will lead to proportional representation by race. On the other hand, Meese hasn't always been a conservative holdout. He was quoted in the *Washington Times* in August as telling conservatives that their supply-side economic program "didn't work" and "now we have to try something else," namely raising taxes. Meese has denied saying that.

None of this may be Meese's real failing in Washington, though. The overarching fact is that he hasn't mastered the trick of getting along with the press. It isn't all that difficult—reporters are notoriously susceptible to stroking so long as it is combined with enough accurate information on which to base a story. But Meese is as inept at schmoozing reporters as Baker is adept. The day before Alexander Haig resigned as secretary of state, Meese assured reporters that there was no friction between Haig and the White House. This led to the *Time* disclosure that Meese didn't learn of the decision to let Haig go until "an hour after Reagan had made the resignation public." Once, the persistent complaint among reporters had been that Meese was inaccessible. When he began to see more of them, they complained he was uninformative. Baker, in contrast, has always been both accessible and informative.

On top of those failings, the Meese team took a heavy-handed approach in responding to the attacks. Meese's deputy, James E. Jenkins, sent an eight-page letter to the *Chicago Tribune* complaining heatedly about Neal's story. Such overkill never works, and it didn't this time.

• • •

Conflict between the news columns and editorial pages isn't exactly uncommon in American newspapers. But not often does it burst into the open as palpably as it did in the *Wall Street Journal* during the summer, with supply-side economics and the Reagan tax increase the source of the jostling. In the news section, Robert W. Merry wrote favorably about Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, the author of the tax bill. Dole was "a wily legislative pro," Merry said, and "many believe it [Dole's tax scheme] makes sense politically and philosophically." Later, an editorial complained that "the one thing that the Dole bill is most sure to produce is lower cash flow as more of business pays more taxes." No economic boon there.

Merry also has the distinction of writing an entire story about the tax hike without characterizing it as a tax increase. It was a "$100 billion revenue bill" and a "$100 billion tax bill," the result of what happens when "Congress reshapes the tax code." As if responding to Merry, the editorial page fired back by saying, "When politicians feel it is necessary to try to disguise a tax increase as a 'tax reform' we know they think they can't sell it on its merits, as payment for a service the people want and will willingly support."

The most blatant conflict came on August 12, the day Albert R. Hunt, the *Journal*'s political reporter, wrote about the Massachusetts governor's race and the editorial page cited other campaign items. Hunt noted that Governor Edward J. King was "the most ardent supply-side economics politician outside of Washington. . . . Many of the most prominent supply-side devotees, including economist Arthur Laffer and the editorial page of The Wall Street Journal, are unabashed admirers of Gov. King's record." That was a shot across the bow. And there was another. Hunt wrote that the economic boom in Massachusetts in the 1970s was "more tied to other factors besides tax cuts, most knowledgeable observers believe."

King didn't figure in the editorial, but some of his supply-side brethren involved in campaigns did, and all were mentioned favorably. "While the Reagan White House has managed to largely purge supply-siders from the federal government, they still seem to be winning elections out in the countryside—even the depressed parts of the countryside," the editorial said. It went on to mention three Republican candidates for governor—Richard Headlee in Michigan, Clarence Brown in Ohio, and Lewis Lehrman in New York. Not only does supply-side economics work, the editorial suggested, it sells. Take that, Al Hunt. □

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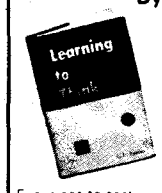

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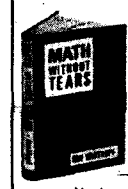

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THE CAMPUS

A CONSERVATIVE PAPER CHASE

by Dinesh D'Souza

In the last two years, some 25 conservative newspapers have appeared on the American campus. There are now such papers at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown, Williams, the University of Chicago, Hollins, and even the University of California at San Diego. And more than 100 conservative journals are due at campuses around the country this fall.

This will come as a surprise to many. After all, as late as 1975 conservatives were languishing in the Ivy League and elsewhere, unable to challenge the cartel of liberal faculty, administrators, and radical students. But as liberalism proved to be a bum rap, the rebellious dreamy children of the sixties became the wheezy washouts of the seventies and eighties. Their ideas stagnated, as did their clothes and belongings. Their children were snot-nosed. The country moved along, leaving them behind; blotchy remnants of an unpleasant era, milk gone sour. Bright and energetic students looked to other avenues to vent creativity and zeal.

In the Ivy League they found these in journalism and conservatism. The raison d'être for the Ivy papers was the crust of liberal thinking that had formed on campus. By 1980 it was a crust dry and crumbly, but one that no one could—or wanted to—skim off. Professors ruminated on it, like cows. Long after the country stopped talking about black revolution and Take Back the Night, these items still recycled on the agenda for faculty and student groups at the universities. The conservative papers were born to sink their teeth into this entrenched liberalism.

The first of the conservative journals was the *Dartmouth Review* which—despite its East Indian editor—proceeded to slaughter sacred cows on campus. The squawkings of the Dartmouth faculty when it saw the paper brought a *Newsweek* reporter on campus. Her story was sardonic, but it only inspired student conservatives at other schools. First, a group of neoconservatives at Harvard founded the Harvard *Salient* and drew sustenance from the Institute for Educational Affairs (IEA), which had also funded the *Dartmouth Review*. Next, Princeton produced the *Madison Report*, named after James Madison, allegedly Princeton's most illustrious conservative alumnus. At Villanova University in Pennsylvania the newly formed *Villanova Free Press* lashed out at the disarmament movement. The phones at the *Dartmouth Review* rang constantly; there were rumblings at Yale, Cornell, the University of Texas, Amherst, Northwestern, even Berkeley. It was becoming almost faddish to start a conservative paper.

The casual interest was translated into political strategy when long-termers at the IEA and The Alternative Educational Foundation sponsored a conference in New York this past January to teach students the nuts and bolts of founding and publishing a conservative periodical. Some 40 colleges were represented at the conference, which the leftist Institute for Policy Studies presaged as politically significant, sending a mole to spy on it. *Time* and the *Nation* tried to sneak in writers. It was all hush-hush and conspiratorial; the students were treated to some simple techniques parceled as backroom strategy. *The American Spectator* had its literati on hand to answer erudite questions and make jokes. Professors, editorial writers, and foundation moguls were circulated among the students. And at the end of it all, the kiddies could cocktail with such thinkers and writers as Irving Kristol, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., Joseph Sobran, and Tom Bethell.

By August this year there were between 20 and 25 papers in operation. These included the papers at Dartmouth, Harvard, and Princeton, as well as: the *Morningside Review*, at Columbia; the *California Review*, at UCSD; the *Williams Republican*, at Williams College; the *Yale Political Monthly*, at Yale; the *Naked Eye*, at Brown; *Counterpoint*, at the University of Chicago; *Texas Forum*, at the University of Texas; and the *Northwest Review*, at Northwestern University. Papers are in the works at George Mason University, the University of Missouri at Saint Louis, Wesleyan, the University of Michigan, and Stanford. The IEA has received notification of nearly 200 conservative papers soon to appear; not all may surface, but that is still an impressive statistic. Funding for these efforts is being lubricated, advisory boards garnered, exchange and reprint agreements approved, and plans drawn up for annual regional conferences.

There is so much demand for information that a former youth coordinator for College Republicans, Steve Baldwin, has set up a news bureau called Project Inform to service the various papers. Baldwin will provide papers with start-up packages, fund-raising and legal advice, and news releases about events at other schools. Meanwhile, the editors of six Ivy League papers have formed a consortium and arranged for exchange advertising and joint fund-raising maneuvers. Primarily through the efforts of this group, economist George Gilder spoke at Harvard, Dartmouth, Yale, and Princeton this year. In addition, the Ivy consortium last winter sponsored a panel of defense experts to straighten out students on the El Salvador issue. The conservative papers at the Ivies and elsewhere are also becoming recruiting centers for the Young America Foundation, Students for Peace and Security, College Republicans, and other such groups.

The papers are now in various stages of maturity. The Harvard *Salient*, the *Madison Report*, the *Dartmouth Review*, *Texas Forum*, the *Yale Political Monthly*, and the *Yale Literary Magazine* have already published many issues. *Texas Forum* was founded in the early sixties and is now distributed to several campuses in Texas. It is a biweekly with a small staff and a modest $6,000 budget. *Texas Forum*, the *Yale Political Monthly*, and the *Salient* are more ponderous than the *Dartmouth Review* and feature mainly national commentary. The *Salient* draws on Harvard's graduate school; last winter it sponsored a debate at Harvard between John Kenneth Galbraith, the local pest, and William F. Buckley, Jr., the irredentist ex-Yalie. The *Dartmouth Review* and the *Madison Report* strike a balance between national and local coverage; they also emphasize investigative reporting. The *Review*'s annual budget is $75,000; it has a staff of 40 undergraduates; the Princeton paper comes out fortnightly and consequently is smaller. The *Yale Lit* each month prints powerful indictments of the *New York Times Book Review* and other pamperers of crime and indulgence. Owned by Yale graduate Andrei Navrozov, the son of Russian émigré Lev Navrozov, the *Lit* is a sophisticated review-review.

The Dartmouth paper is perhaps the most controversial of all the

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publications, having found its way by now into most of the nation's media, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. But just as pepperish are the *California Review* and the *Williams Republican*. Such epithets as "sexist," "insensitive," and "homophobe" have been used in regional publications to describe the editors of these papers.

The *Claremont Review of Books* at Claremont College in California, *Counterpoint* at the University of Chicago, and the *Hillsdale Review* at Hillsdale College in Michigan print lengthy essays and book reviews. Claremont and Hillsdale are traditional bulwarks of conservative activity. *Counterpoint* is a glossy magazine supervised by John Podhoretz, heir to *Commentary*'s Norman. All three papers have given serious attention to conservative ideology, as opposed to ephemeral issues.

Now take a look at a couple of papers in embryo: the *Sequent*, at George Washington University; and the *Red and Blue*, at the University of Pennsylvania. Both will publish for the first time this fall. Budgets are around $10,000; the staff size varies from 10 to 25. The *Sequent* will be the first student conservative paper in the nation's capital; it has already captured Phil Nicolaides and Morton Blackwell for its advisory board. Mike Waller, a junior at George Washington and editor of the *Sequent*, has big plans for his paper: He wants to provide "news from the capital" via teletype to all the student papers nationwide. He also wants the *Sequent* to spread to the other D.C. campuses. The *Red and Blue*, on the other hand, is content to deal with problems at its own U-Penn, which are myriad. After all, where else but at U-Penn would an editor of the *Daily Pennsylvanian* write a column approving of the assassination attempt on President Reagan? Where else would a top college official, in no minced words, call the entire white student body "racist"? Says Avery Lackner, editor of the Penn paper, "We will have our hands full with the home situation." Lackner's paper is a resurrection of an old literary monthly at Penn, which went defunct in 1938; the new version, he says, will be somewhat more political. Lackner reports troubles for the paper from the university, in the form of faculty discouragement and bureaucratic stalling.

Most of the conservative papers, with the notable exception of the *Salient*, have met with some hostility on campus. The *Yale Literary Magazine* and the *Dartmouth Review* have been threatened by the administration for using the college name. The *Williams Republican* has been targeted by deans, under pressure from the fillies of the feminist movement. *Texas Forum* has, over the years, chalked up a catalogue of woes: colleges refusing to allow circulation on campus, attempts to blackball students writing for the paper, and—in the sixties—firebombing of newspaper stands. But few of the papers have sustained as brutal a resistance from the college as the *Dartmouth Review*. The opposition's tactics have ranged from threats of lawsuit to the assault of a newspaper editor by an enraged college official. *National Review*, the *New York Times*, and the *New Republic* have reported on the college's attempts to block the Dartmouth paper. As Prof. Jeffrey Hart has said of Dartmouth's course of action: "I've never seen such dirty tricks, and I worked with Chuck Colson."

Now it is tempting to say that the plaints of faculty and administrative whim-whams are usually not fatal for a newspaper, that they bring needed publicity. The real grind for students is quotidian: selling ads, procuring and editing copy, mailing out fundraisers, emptying out trash bags. Since the papers are voluntary, demoralization can accompany these daily yawners; the paper must be good so the aesthetic compensates for the work. The conservative papers must also find students with the business and legal aptitude to handle incorporation, annual accounting, and government legalese. Still, college opposition and media mauling can intimidate students, most of whom are not used to waking up to read in the *Boston Globe* that they belong to "the politics of hate and resentment."

The student papers have also been plagued by the charge, leveled notably by conspiracy theorists at the *Nation*, that they are, somehow, tools of corporate America. The *Nation* intimated to its eager readership that, gadzooks, the whole idea of academic freedom is being jeopardized. Given that all private colleges are heavily subsidized by corporate grants and private donations, given that even government grants include strings and limiting criteria, given that the conservative papers have not received funds from a single profit-making corporation (not even the oil companies), given the minimal revenue they draw from advertising (which also greases wheels at the *Nation*), and given the small-business penchant of the newspapers, all of which took a dim view of the Chrysler bailout, the *Nation*'s accusation is rendered enigmatic.

It is true that the conservative papers have been funded, in part, by nonprofit foundations. This is because the papers are tax exempt, and abide by the philanthropic goals of the various foundations. Liberals have their foundations too: Ford, Rockefeller, et al. Like the conservative foundations, they do not give grants contingent upon the recipients' following a pre-set agenda. Rather, grantees must *already* be pursuing an approved path. The reason the conservative papers get money (usually around $5,000) from right-leaning foundations is because they are good investments in the market of ideas.

The *New Republic*, less enamored of the corporate takeover concept, played a variation on the theme. *TNR*'s insight was that the papers are

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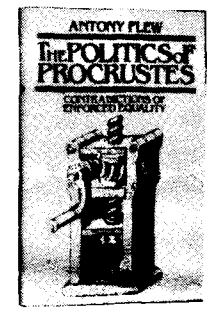

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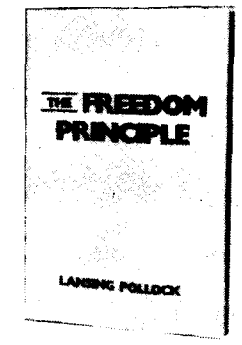

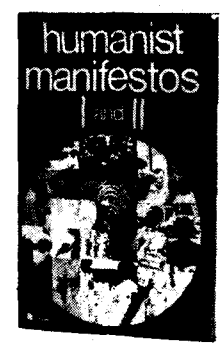

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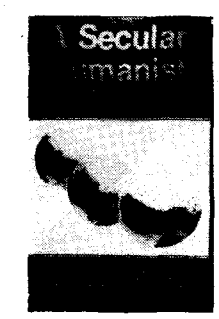

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the truncheon-bearers of vindictive alumni. Of the *Dartmouth Review* it opined, "Instead of outraging stuffy alumni who harrumph about 'kids today,' *The Review* panders to them . . . from the start the paper has been in part an expression of the fears and wants of conservative alumni." This charge carries more credibility than that of the *Nation*. The conservative journals are, for the most part, bankrolled by alumni.

That the papers express the suppressed angst of alumni is, if anything, laudable; after all, the alumni of a private college finance the institution and ought to have a say in the ethos it adopts. But do the papers "pander" to alumni, in the sense of echoing their sentimental dreams of yesteryear? On the contrary. The papers have been frank in reminding alumni of the realities of today's school system—in most cases the grim reality of entrenched liberalism. The alumni are not hospitable to this notion of a corrupted institution; they want to believe their schools the idyllic places they left long ago. So there is tension between the urgent goals of the students, and the maudlin flashbacks of alumni.

Now it can readily be conceded that the papers do not exist to taunt the wishes of faraway alumni. What would this accomplish? The conservative papers have a different agenda. They want to outrage what is more omniscient in, and threatening to, their own worlds: the college administration. And while the alumni are out in the real world, chastised in their idealism by everyday views and events, the college administrators are insulated and unsinged; they have only an acquiescent student body on which to experiment. Simply put, they need more waking up than do the alumni.

For all the college hassles and charges of puppetry, the papers will endure. They are learning the hard way. Conservative students are discovering that they are not part of the "diversity" vaunted at liberal arts colleges; they must storm the citadel from the outside. They are being told that their publications are splitting up the community, that they are debating "divisive" issues (when we all know that the only debates that should occur are over issues on which there is absolute unanimity). Students are seeing that the universities—sometimes in cahoots with each other—are making every effort to stop them, in the expectation that the travails of putting out a paper, meeting punishment from the college, and handling course loads will be too much for ordinary students to manage.

The premises are wrong. These are not ordinary students. My informal poll suggests that the grade average on these papers is well above the college mean. Several editors of these journals write for regional and national papers; Charles Kesler at the *Salient*, for example, is a regular contributor to *National Review*. Also, the conservative papers have powerful artillery behind them: columnists, donors, politicians. Finally, the more bellicose the opposition gets, the tougher the students become, and it is not difficult for a plucky lot to penetrate the Maginot Line of the administration; if the sixties proved anything, it is that academia is vulnerable.

The conservative papers, however, want to go a step further. Their scalpel must not only be sharp, it must also be wielded with care. Academia must not just be dissected, it must also be cured. Occasionally the conservative papers have erred on the side of buoyancy and ribald humor. If they are to succeed in their mission, they must be more discriminating. □

Looking Back at Watergate

Ten years ago, strange phrases began creeping into our national vocabulary: stonewalling, deep six, limited hangout, the Big Enchilada. These phrases and others, like expletive deleted and smoking gun, came to be covered by the umbrella term of Watergate.

We look at Watergate now that ten years have passed partly because we believe with Aeschylus that time teaches many lessons, and partly because we recall Santayana's dictum that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Yet Santayana was only half right. Remembering what happened is not enough. We also need to know *why*.

In this tenth anniversary year of Watergate many people remember that the system worked the way the founding fathers intended. But we knew that at the time. Indeed, right after one president resigned, the new president announced: "Our long national nightmare is over. Our Constitution works."

Yes, it worked. But why?

Certainly the courts, the congressional committees, and the special prosecutor were important. But none of them would have been effective if they were not supported by the people.

When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of turning over Oval Office tape recordings, the President was forced to comply because the people demanded it. Another president, Andrew Jackson, successfully ignored a Supreme Court decision against his plan to move American Indians west of the Mississippi. "Justice Marshall made his decision," Jackson thundered. "Now let him enforce it." Jackson succeeded because he had public backing. During Watergate the people backed the courts.

The people supported gavel-to-gavel TV coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings because of their desire to know for themselves what happened. Support was so great that the hearings received better ratings than the soap operas they pushed off the air.

The House impeachment committee announced it would not go to court to enforce its subpoena of Watergate tapes. The subpoena could have been ignored. It wasn't because the people supported the committee.

When the Watergate special prosecutor was fired and his office abolished, it was public protest that forced the office to be reopened and a new special prosecutor appointed. The new prosecutor had no statutory tenure. He could have been fired as well. He wasn't because the people would not have stood for it.

Had the people viewed the actions of the courts, Congress, or the special prosecutor as unfair or unwise, the President could have ignored those actions. The people would have supported him. The people judged otherwise and the system worked.

A decade's passage of time has prompted many to write where-are-they-now stories about those who took part in the Watergate drama. But Watergate a decade later is not about them. It's about all of us as Americans. And what we learn from Watergate tells us more about ourselves than about our system. Watergate teaches us that only an informed, interested citizenry can ensure that the system works. It's a lesson we never can learn too well.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

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AMERICA IN SEARCH OF ITSELF: THE MAKING OF THE PRESIDENT 1956-1980
Theodore H. White / Harper & Row / $15.95

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

A few months ago I watched a lot of people (the count varied from 200,000 to 800,000 depending on the counter's politics) milling around Manhattan, chanting peace slogans, carrying placards, listening to rock music and left-wing rhetoric, in the simple-minded belief that, if they could only shout loudly enough and turn the rock decibels up high enough, the danger of a nuclear war would somehow be conjured away. Looking at this sample of the *demos*, I found myself wondering how democracy could possibly survive in a world of ruthless despots. The most discouraging aspect of the show was that in all probability not one in a hundred of the demonstrators was consciously implementing Soviet policy. I doubt that many of them, had they been asked, would have said that they believed their demonstration would have an effect on the governments of Russia, China, France, and the rest of the nuclear powers: They were simply too ignorant, and too muddleheaded, to think about the problem in any terms more complex than the undoubted fact that nuclear explosions are bad and that the United States must *therefore* abandon its arsenal of such weapons. The premise is sound, the conclusion is not. But the vast majority of the human race is averse to hard, rational thinking. Slogan-chanting is easier and more emotionally satisfying.

But, as always, such gloomy reflections can be dispelled by remembering Winston Churchill's aphorism: "Democracy is the worst form of government imaginable, except all the others." Churchill and Roosevelt were abler leaders than Hitler and Stalin, let alone Mussolini. Moreover, democracy has other advantages than being less inefficient than dictatorship. Honest elections at regular intervals control popular discontent better than the Gestapo/KGB. These elections also serve the function of the Roman circus, for they are absorbing entertainment for the masses, especially since the rise of TV. (Suppose the whole nation could have heard and seen William Jennings Bryan deliver the cross-of-gold speech!) Of all the political circuses the best is the quadrennial election of the President of the United States, with freak and other side shows if the action in the main tent fails to hold the audience's attention. Evidence of the vast entertainment value of the show is the fact that Theodore White, a very knowledgeable political reporter, has made a career out of writing best-sellers about "The Making of the President"—1960, 1964, 1968, 1972, and now 1980.

About half of *America in Search of Itself* is in fact simply *The Making of the President—1980,* in the usual format. But Mr. White also goes back and sums up the campaigns of 1956 and 1976, both omitted from the earlier canon. Not one to waste good material, he has riffled through his files and pieced out chapters with swift sketches of eminent politicians of two or three decades ago who never quite made the White House, his notes on the civil rights movement of the sixties, and a short history of Tammany Hall, all very readable and instructive. (I learned for the first time that William Marcy Tweed, the most famous and corrupt of the Tammany sachems, was a WASP. It was only after his time that the Wigwam was taken over by a succession of Irish pols, such as Big Tim Sullivan and Richard Croker, who according to the old *New York Sun* once had his portrait painted "with his hands in his own pockets.") The book's title is more or less justified by chapters on the great changes which in the last quarter century have occurred in the composition of the American electorate—e.g., the declining importance of the ethnic block votes, deliverable by urban bosses like the late Richard Daley—and in the rules of the American game of politics. Except for its account of the 1980 campaign, the book is thus somewhat disjointed. The seams show where material of only marginal relevance, but too good to discard, has been stitched into the main fabric.

One reason for the readability and knowledgeability of Mr. White's reporting is that he actually *likes* politicians. (Most of them are by definition likable men and women. The men seem to me generally more likable than the women, although Connecticut never had a more popular governor than the late Ella Grasso, who preferred to think of herself not as the state's first woman governor but as its first Italian one.) He likes them all, from Teddy Kennedy to Ronald Reagan, and writes about them with affection, with the exceptions of Richard M. Nixon and the late Joe McCarthy.

White thinks that the facts of American political life in the 1980 campaign were as different from those of 1956 as the latter were from the Lincoln-Douglas debates. I have already mentioned the decline of the machines and bosses. Mr. White discusses at some length the question of whether ethnic votes are still important, and seems to stand on both sides of the question. Certainly there has been no such thing as a German vote, not even in Cincinnati or Milwaukee, for at least a century; the descendants of German immigrants (except a few anachronisms like the Amish) have been so thoroughly fused in the melting pot as to be simply, along with WASPs, part of the homogeneous mass of what Mr. White calls "old stock" Americans, who probably still make up a majority of the population. Nobody ever paused to consider that Eisenhower is a German name. The same thing is true of Scandinavians. Despite John O'Hara's pronouncement that "the Irish are unassimilable," they seem to be going the same way, through intermarriage, material success, and the virtual disappearance of prejudice against them. (As White, himself a Bostonian, points out, however, the Boston Irish are still a powerful ethnic vote; they regularly support Teddy Kennedy, although few of them can like his left-liberal opinions.)

The descendants of the last great wave of Caucasian immigration (Poles, Italians, Greeks, and Slavs), although rapidly moving into the suburbs and the mainstream of American culture, still tend to vote for politicians with names like their own, although in 1980 many of them abandoned their traditional allegiance to the memory of Roosevelt II. A large majority of Jews continued to vote Democratic (where possible for Jewish Democrats), but more of them

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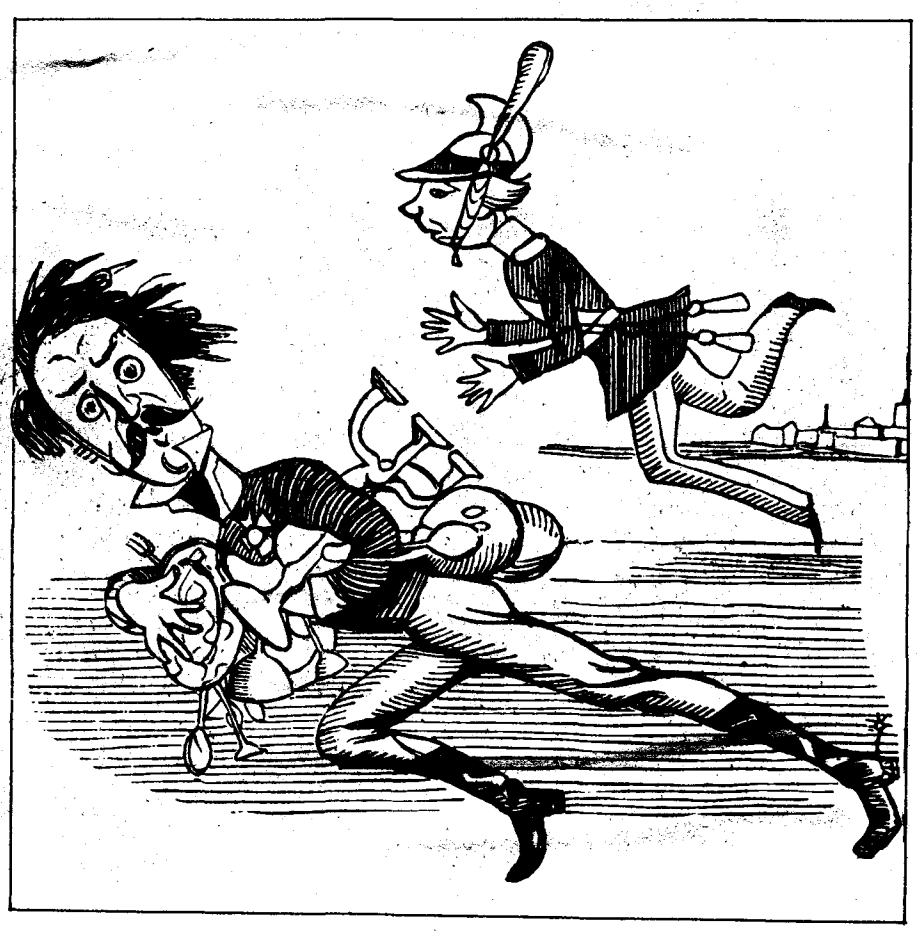
defected in 1980 than at any time since FDR's first election. The balanced ticket—one Irishman, one Jew, one Italian—is still part of conventional political wisdom in New York. Balance does not, however, require a black or a Puerto Rican, probably because so small a percentage of them—particularly as compared with Jews, of whom 80 to 90 percent will vote in any election—bother to register and vote. John Lindsay was a loser because he overestimated the importance of the nonwhite vote and cultivated it even when black interests differed widely from those of Italians and Jews; Ed Koch is a winner because he did not. In the future it seems probable that the only minority groups whose voting pattern will differ significantly from that of other Americans will be blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos, i.e., those most in need of public assistance and least concerned about taxes.

White devotes a longish chapter and parts of several others to the enormous changes wrought by television since 1956—as he points out, a great boon to a professional actor like Ronald Reagan. Candidates must allocate most of their money to TV commercials, unless (as an incumbent President usually can) they are able to create genuine news, so that the publicity is free. TV probably accounts for the virtual extinction of campaign buttons (I myself can remember "Keep Cool with Coolidge" and "Who But Hoover?"), bumper stickers, and campaign biographies. (I recently lost a chance to acquire for a dime a volume entitled "Paul V. McNutt: Portrait of a Statesman.") These were all interesting pop art forms, and I regret their disappearance; it is like the circus no longer selling pictures of the fat lady. TV is also responsible for the rise of the "image makers," mostly recruited from the upper levels of the advertising industry. (It is interesting, if dispiriting, to reflect on what William Bernbach or Gerald Rafshoon would have done to Abraham Lincoln.) There is also a good deal about pollsters in the book. They take some of the fun out of an election, for not since the disaster of 1948 have their predictions been seriously at fault, but they add some excitement, too, for the electorate has become so volatile that a candidate can blow a lead in a few days. I remain convinced that if the 1976 campaign had lasted a week or so longer Gerald Ford would have won.

Which brings me to the most interesting part of the book: White's description and analysis of the factors that licked Carter in 1980. They were, in approximate order of importance, inflation, Iran, and Andrew Young. No comment on the first is necessary; it created fear and anger in everyone except the *really* rich. Iran was almost as difficult to ignore, especially since the President at first seems to have thought it would work to his political advantage. Andy Young made James Watt look cautious and tactful. He said nice things about Communist Vietnam, about the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, about the Ayatollah Khomeini; he downplayed the low state of human rights in the Soviet Union by saying that there were hundreds or thousands of political prisoners in the United States; he accused the British government of racism; in the United Nations he voted—apparently without informing the President and the secretary of state—to deny Israel sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Carter's handling of these large and small crises was pathetic and, at times, comic. He handled inflation with the least ineptitude, by doing substantially nothing. His policy on the Iranian kidnapping of American diplomats, vacillating between appeasement and surrender and culminating in the payment of billions in ransom, was typified by his decision, shortly after the kidnapping, to send Ramsey Clark to Tehran to appeal to the Ayatollah's better nature. (That holy man, who apparently did not realize what a useful propagandist Clark would have been, refused to let him in the country.) As for Andy, the President stood for everything, merely wringing his hands occasionally, until the Ambassador to the United Nations violated a basic American policy by negotiating directly with the Palestine Liberation Organization and, when questioned, lied to the President and the secretary of state. And even after that performance, Carter seemed close to tears as he fired him. Young, it may be remarked in passing, was an aspect of another Carter policy which, though it offered short-term advantages, hurt his chances in the long run—the introduction of affirmative action and (high) quotas for blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and women in appointments to executive and judicial office. Many of these appointees were competent, but some were not. Carter never resolved, and perhaps never realized, the dilemma created by the conflict between equality of opportunity, where merit is the sole criterion, and equality of result, where race and sex become important factors.

Carter entered the White House an unknown quantity to most people; when he left he was not much better understood. White places great emphasis on his born-again, fundamentalist Christianity, his belief that every word in the Bible, including its account of creation, is literally true. Carter *did* talk like that, but I think White exaggerates the depth of his religious belief. It is, of course, possible to hold rational opinions on science, business, or politics, while fervently believing religious dogmas that contradict everything the believer knows in other compartments of his mind. But it is hard to imagine a graduate of the United States Naval Academy (near the top of his class, at that) believing that the Earth is flat and square and harder to imagine a strong opponent of racism taking literally the teaching of Genesis 9:22, 25-27 that the descendants of Ham shall be the servants of the descendants of Shem and Japheth, verses which before the Civil War were often cited to prove that Negro slavery was of divine institution. Carter is a decent man, if not a strong one, and no doubt his religious belief helped make him so, but when his fundamentalism collided with his liberal principles, it came out second. There is no love lost between him and the Moral Majority. Perhaps, like the sainted Woodrow Wilson (to whom Mr. White justly compares him), he was too virtuous and pious to appreciate fully the capacity for mendacity and ruthless brutality possessed by some of the people with whom he had to deal.



Sprinkled throughout the book are acute observations. White is one of the first to raise the thorny problems implicit in the fact that many of the new immigrants are nonwhite and illegal, not only unable to speak English but (unlike the old ethnics) not particularly anxious that they or their children learn to do so. Whether they will find the political institutions of the United States more congenial and comprehensible than its language is a question only time can answer. White is also one of the first to see the fallacy in generalizations about Afro-Americans, to realize that there are two black communities, with very little in common and little liking for each other—the black upper and middle class and the black underclass with its crime, drug addiction, teenage pregnancies, and enormous number of illegitimate births. White correctly refers to "the cleavage in the black community—between those accepted and moving forward and those despised and ever more resentful." Statistics showing the disadvantages under which "blacks" labor are distorted by failure to distinguish between the two black communities: Liberal politicians such as Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter were largely motivated by compassion for the black underclass, but the money and programs intended to get the slum-dwellers out of the hopeless cycle of welfare moms breeding welfare children benefited largely the educated, upward-mobile blacks, who got the government and foundation jobs.

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Of course the book contains occasional error and weaknesses. The Democratic party of the United States is not "the world's oldest continuous living party": The British Tories can trace their ancestry at least to Queen Anne's time, when their leader, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, invented the spoils system. White uses the word "gay" without quotation marks to describe homosexuals, thereby contributing to the corruption of an honest and useful adjective for which there is no precise synonym. His view of the Vietnam war seems to me rather more naive (e.g., South Vietnam was a "fictitious country," the Tet offensive of 1968 was a great military victory for North Vietnam) than is proper for an intelligent and well-informed man in 1982. Such notions are commonplace among the orthodox left-liberal reporters who have been elevated to the peerage as "media personalities," and I criticize Mr. White only because he is a much better than ordinary political writer.

I can hardly wait for the 1982 campaign; I can already hear the calliope emitting preliminary toots. What about A. Bartlett Giamatti, who is mentioned by Mr. White as having a chance to be the first Italian-American to become President of the United States as well as Yale? (No college president can ever quite put Woodrow Wilson out of his mind.) Can Jerry Brown overcome his reputation as a flake? Is Chappaquiddick yet forgotten? In 1980 Teddy Kennedy wrongly thought it was, but by 1984 fifteen years will have passed. Here I must break new ground: There is working against the Senator a political law of which Mr. White is obviously ignorant. I call it "Bishop's law," and it provides that no politician whom I have actually met can be elected President. Before I knew that I had this dreadful power, I killed Hubert Humphrey's chances at a cocktail party in 1947, and Estes Kefauver's a few years later. It was only after Nelson Rockefeller's final failure that I began to suspect the existence of the law. In 1980 I went out of my way to shake Edward M. Kennedy's hand and look him in the eye. Does it work only when I have no intention of eliminating the candidate? If so, Kennedy will not be affected (though I think I hexed him in 1980), but Brown and Giamatti are out of it. I have never met Ronald Reagan, but suppose I do? Not until the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November 1984 will I be able to formulate the law more precisely. It ought to be a swell election. □

TAKE FIVE

D. Keith Mano / Doubleday / $17.95

John P. Sisk

Hitherto, I gather, D. Keith Mano's work has been more highly regarded by critics than readers. *Take Five*, his seventh novel, is not likely to change this situation. It is long (583 pages), hard to get into, and hard to stay with. It will be too religious for many confirmed secularists, too often bawdy and obscene for many believers. I was 200 pages into it and 35,000 feet in the air somewhere between Chicago and Salt Lake before I began to feel at home with it. The Haydn-Mozart concert on the airplane's communication system no doubt helped.

Ultimately, the central figure in *Take Five* is the omniscient observer, but immediately it is Simon Lynxx, a free-lance film maker who has two prize-winning short subjects to his credit, and who as the story opens has filmed one scene of an ambitious "counter-epic" to be called *Jesus 2001*. It is his need to get funds to complete this raffish enterprise that precipitates the action. Since he is a driven man, an utter hedonist frankly without principle who hates only two things in life, poverty and boredom, he quickly gets into the right kind of story-trouble and stays there until he arrives at an absolutely unforeseen point of rest.

Spiritually, Simon travels a great distance in this novel. However, two conditions cooperate to accelerate the pace so that, apart from the skillfully managed flashbacks, very little chronological time is involved: He has little ability to restrain his insatiable appetites, and he is cast in the role of the traditional picaro who must live by his wits outside the law. He the unmitigated sensualist must also live without his sense of taste after mistaking gasoline for olive oil at a cookout for his movie crew and setting his mouth on fire—an accident that, oddly enough, only aggravates his logorrhea.

So handicapped and desperate for money, Simon then tricks his way into an acquaintance with a beautiful Episcopalian priest, mistaking her for the daughter of a millionaire; he disguises himself as a black film maker in an unsuccessful attempt to bilk a funding organization; having finagled his way into a meeting with a wealthy and powerful producer, he arranges a mugging scenario with two of his movie crew so that he can further his cause by rescuing the producer; the grateful victim promises help and induces Simon to experiment with a drug that leaves him without his sense of smell; he is balked in his attempt to seduce the beautiful priest, having persuaded her to descend with him into a drainpipe in a park playground, just as he had earlier been balked by a cast iron chastity belt in his attempt to score with a temporary member of his crew; he is beaten up and hospitalized by the muggers he had employed to mug the producer, they now being in the employ of the latter who has discovered the fraud; badly crippled, incontinent, impotent, with his hearing impaired and about to lose his sight, suffering from the discovery that he is an orphan, he then refuses the three million the producer offers him to make a film, after acknowledging his sins and forgiving his enemies he is married to his beautiful priest; utterly incapacitated now, capable only of faint dictation into a cassette player, he dies—thunders into Paradise, we are told in the last sentence, as if it were a china shop.

So we have again one of the greatest of Christian themes: the Fortunate Fall. Simon who loses all he ever wanted ends up with more than he ever bargained for because "Grace, the lawless," "the soul-tease," the trickster that delights in serving those first who come last, has broken in on him. Like Simon of Cyrene (the epigraph is from Luke's gospel), he is recruited out of nowhere to help carry the cross. It all happens in the present tense (which can be tiresome even though it intensifies the nowness, the urgency of the story) and with reversed pagination (which can be an inconvenience for the reviewer). Both devices, I suspect, are intended to reinforce the thematic paradox so memorably stated in "East Coker" by the converted Simon's co-religionist T.S. Eliot: "In my end is my beginning."

The problem, however, will be not the theme but the context. Throughout most of the novel Simon is such an exuberant foulmouth that for many readers the theme will be contaminated rather than once more validated. Mano will upset some of his fellow Christians much as Graham Greene upset some of his fellow Catholics with novels like *Brighton Rock*, *The End of the Affair*, and *The Heart of the Matter*. It will not be easy for them to distinguish *Take Five* from novels like Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* or Joseph Heller's *Good As Gold*, which present hyped up and farcified pictures of a scabrous world so closed in on itself that skillfully managed pratfalls must substitute for Fortunate Falls. Even Merry Allen the priest, the agency of grace who teaches Simon gentleness and who is for me an attractive character, is too inclined to use the clichés of the foulmouth world (even Simon agrees that they do not become her).

In a recent interview with Anthony Burgess, Graham Greene speaks of his discovery that "the right way was the way of simplicity, straight sentences, no involutions, no ambiguities." This is not Mano's way. His novel is at times as hard to read as *Finnegan's Wake*, and for some of the same reasons. The spirit of the

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pun runs wild in it. "Simon's associative talents, especially his visual talents, are remarkable," we are told by the omniscient observer, who of course displays the same talents in his own voice. These are the talents that lead others—Herman Wolff the producer, for instance—to call him a genius, but they also lead Merry Allen, in a moment of exasperation, to refer to his "diarrhea of the mouth." Toward the end Simon himself refers to his "Cancer of the consciousness. . . . I can't pick up a paper clip but it's attached to all the others in the jar."

Simon's diarrhea of the mouth is an impressive virtuoso display on the part of the author, but it is also why the novel is so long. There are just too many paper clips in the jar and Simon, the overreacher, wants them all. The diarrhea is repeated in the narrative technique. There are time breaks between episodes, but once we are in an episode, and Simon's cancer of the consciousness takes command, absolutely everything that comes to his attention, including sounds of all sorts, is reproduced in words. The result often is a regrettable lack of staging, so that comic moments, of which there are many, tend to blur into one another. One is reminded of F. Scott Fitzgerald's distinction between novelists who like himself are leaver-outers and novelists like Thomas Wolfe who are putter-inners. Mano belongs with the putter-inners. Given his need to dramatize the unselective cancerous nature of the modern imagination cut loose from its theological moorings, the excessiveness is no doubt hard to avoid. I think he might have left out a lot, but he might respond, as Wolfe did to Fitzgerald, "that Shakespeare and Cervantes and Dostoevsky were great putter-inners—greater putter-inners, in fact, than they were taker-outers and will be remembered for what they put in." And I must concede that, among other things, Mano puts in an astonishing number and variety of characters.

There is another problem with Simon, who though he is not a figure in a realistic novel is still displayed as a particular person with a history in the "real" world. His imagination is crammed with information about that world in all its categories: sports, politics, literature, drama, religion, history. With his cancerous consciousness he often suggests a frenetic polymath. But where does what Merry Allen calls "the marvelous verbal life" come from? It's hard to imagine Simon ever sitting still long enough to read anything—certainly not that great punster, Shakespeare, with whom he is so familiar.

But perhaps the marvelous verbal life should be taken as a given, the important thing being that Simon's passage from the obscene to the sacred is a triumph of metaphor. Mano writes as if he takes metaphor as seriously as Shakespeare does: not as a game that enlivens the confining prison house of language, but as an indispensable access to a reality beyond. He apparently believes that a Christian's faith in metaphor should be in analogy with Merry Allen's faith in Christ. The reader must be willing to accept Simon's associative talents as an adequate preparation for, even an anticipation of, the breaking in of lawless grace, and if he cannot he will be put off by the lack of parity between Simon's beginning and end. Simon the great dissimulator must be seen as aware of the irony that he has been saved by a love that is, as St. Paul tells the Romans it must be, without dissimulation. He who has wanted everything and has had faith in no one must be ready for the great passage from Matthew when shortly before their marriage Merry recites it to him: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . ."

It is not a question whether Simon is worth saving; in the Christian economy the worst of us are, which is good news but does not necessarily make a good story. The question is whether in the novel the saving is ruined by gratuitousness. I don't think it is, but Simon's coming home is a long and sometimes exasperating haul. □

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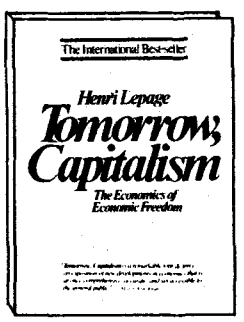

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OLD GLORY: AN AMERICAN VOYAGE
Jonathan Raban / Simon and Schuster / $16.95

John S. Peterson

There is no denying that Anglo-American travel writing has become a spent genre. Anyone doubting this is invited to draw up a list of travel books written during the seventies that bear rereading. Sad to say, the exhaustion is most pronounced among the literary bohemians, once a flourishing and exuberant tribe. Judging by the sighs from Greenwich Village, no one here at home has the energy to bay at the moon or embark on a Whitmanesque tramp. Across the water, of course, the vitality is even lower. In the hundred years since Robert Louis Stevenson penned his magnificent essay, "An Apology For Idlers," much has happened to dampen the spirits of British bohemia. No one gets around much anymore. No one, at any rate, quite like Jonathan Raban.

Shortly after completing his Arabian book, Raban found himself in the doldrums, unable to write. The doldrums led to an obsession with an image from his boyhood reading, the image of Huck Finn on a raft on the Mississippi River. The obsession suggested a trip and a book proposal worthy of the Master, RLS himself. In Raban's mind, "The book and journey would be all of a piece. The plot would be written by the current of the river itself. It would carry me into long pools of solitude, and into brushes with society on shore. Where the river meandered, so would the book. . . .Everything would be left to chance. There'd be no advance reservations, no letters of introduction. I would try to be as much like a piece of human driftwood as I could manage . . ."

And so, in September 1979, the dreamy Englishman arrives in Minneapolis to pick up a 16-foot motorboat and begin his book. After grinning through six departure takes for a local TV station, he finds himself alone on the Mississippi. Six miles downstream one can understand why the *New York Times* has tagged Raban as a "brilliant tragic-comedian of travel." In Lock One he nearly capsizes in the wake of a barge, prompting an enraged lockman to shout: "N'Orleans? . . . I'm telling you, man, you get to N'Orleans, you can send me a f-----' postcard!"

Mercifully, Raban becomes somewhat adept at dodging barges and logs. On the upper river there are moments of huckleberry transcendence—moments when he can fish, or sing, or pull into a slough and read John Cheever. But the river demands constant vigilance and Raban is a long way from suburban Connecticut. Each time he begins feeling too comfortable, he is attacked by mosquitoes or a squadron of dive-bombing birds. Storms and high winds force him to hole up in a string of water-

John S. Peterson is a New York writer at work on an essay collection entitled "Social Work & Other 70s Fables."

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front bars. For solace, he reads Laurence Sterne or croons an advertising jingle from home:

In foreign climes there are at times
Some moments quite appalling;
But none too fraught to set at naught
By a stiff drink mixed with Rawlings.

Along the way, Raban manages to do a good bit of adventuring ashore. À la Calvin Trillin, he sniffs at hot dogs at the Minnesota State Fair, has his first taste of squirrel in Wisconsin, attends an Iowa pig roast, goes coon hunting and meets up with a skunk in Illinois. À la Charles Kuralt, he pokes his nose into houseboats and Lutheran church services, buys a Jackson Pollack-like fishing lure, sleeps in Al Capone's Dubuque hotel, dates a grade-school teacher, shoots abysmal pool.

Each town brings a fresh batch of acquaintances and interviewees, though hardly the longueurs of Raban's dream. There is "Garfish," the lockman who takes the Englishman to inspect his ham radio, gun collection, and wife, who keeps a notebook of St. John of the Cross. There is the Jesus-haired cab driver bitter over the breakup of his rock band and the fact of being stranded in La Crosse—"They're not too bright around here. I hate this f-----' city." Then there is the Dubuque divorcée who sizes up Raban in a flash. "You look like Tom Wolfe . . . I know you're not Tom Wolfe, because Tom Wolfe wouldn't be in Dubuque. But you look like Tom Wolfe, and if Tom Wolfe was in Dubuque he'd be doing what you're doing." "What am I doing?" "You're watching people from under your eyelids and spinning that pen around . . . Just like Tom Wolfe . . ."

As his adventures accumulate, Raban develops a bad case of the shakes. In Buffalo, Iowa, he steps into a bar and has his hat snatched by a group of Hells Angels. Lacking Dr. Hunter Thompson's finesse in such matters, Raban can only stand outside and hope the Angels will stop teasing. But—"Guy's lorst his hayt" —they won't, which leaves him feeling sour and resentful. He later attempts to ride the river by night and is nearly sucked under by a barge, which leaves him blubbering in shock. Knocking on a door for help, he finds himself covered—"Let him in, I guess. But keep that gun on him." Like Raban, his book limps into St. Louis on the verge of sniffles.

There are some problems here. Although *Old Glory* contains some fine reportage and much fascinating river lore, the author's neurasthenia comes close to turning it into a Woody Allen film. Indeed, as Raban hits St. Louis's talk shows to assuage his loneliness and then retreats to the suburbs for a chapter titled "Marriage À La Mode," one wonders whether he'll have the nerve to finish the trip. At the same time, one wonders what Huck Finn's creator would make of the bedraggled Englishman. Perhaps —like many reviewers—Mark Twain would coo over Raban's vulnerability and award him a cookie. No, that's something Aunt Polly or a John Leonard might do. More likely, Twain would kick Raban in the shins for disgracing Huck and the memory of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Fortunately for his editors, the author becomes rested enough to break up housekeeping and get back on the river. This is done with a requisite amount of breast beating. The woman called Raban a coward, and Raban feels . . . badly. Not badly enough to write her out of the book, but badly. ". . . Some men are good at French cookery and putting up shelves; my specialty was the quiet exit through the back door, sneakers across the lawn and the relief of the cool air outside . . . But coward? . . . If riding the river was like anything else in life, it was like writing . . . One needed a degree of disengagement to do either. Maybe Sally was right, and it was a streak of cowardice that impelled me to do both." Maybe Sally was right. Maybe Jonathan shouldn't have contracted to write while posing as a piece of Mississippi driftwood.*

The book now clips along on a nine-knot current. The Englishman encounters boils of turbulence and trees ripped up by their roots. He also encounters a pair of armed men in a fast boat who check him out, then let him pass. With each mile, the lower Mississippi becomes an increasingly risky proposition. Near Cape Girardeau, Raban meets an engineer who is appalled at his foolishness in traveling without a radio. The man implores him to install one, so as to know what the tows are doing in the chutes. Feeling sheepish as usual, Raban does as he is told.

In need of diversion, the author pulls into Memphis and becomes caught up in a bitter mayoral campaign. Here the defeat of a black judge provides grist for some both-sides-now moralizing. On departing, Raban visits a black church and is nettled by what he perceives to be reverse racism in the minister's sermon. Silent at the time, he now composes an anguished liberal sermonette in rebuttal: "Racism is another two-handed sword which cuts right and left, and you really swung it hard at your end of the sermon. You turned me into a half person and turned yourself into one too. You were condemning both of us to the dirty charade of white versus black, head versus heart, male versus female . . . I have no right to talk to you like this, but please wake up!" In the next paragraph Raban concedes the weakness of his sermon. It belongs, he says, to "the bold second thoughts on the door of the front steps after the event is over." Amen, brother.

By late November the Mississippi is too rough for Raban to ride with any degree of safety. As a consequence, he covers most of the stretch between Memphis and New Orleans as a guest aboard a pair of tows. On the second one, he meets a character worthy of his dreams, someone he can look up to. Captain Bob "Boom Boom" Kelley is seemingly everything Raban is not—crusty, eccentric, a man of distinct and forceful views. A Mississippi river pilot who plays 12-string guitar and can quote Raban a five-minute selection from Longfellow. "You know, when you think about the Cajuns, that 'Evangeline' just about says it all." On a night watch approaching New Orleans, the two swap tales and general palaver. As Raban's boat is lifted off, Kelley slips him a note that leaves the Englishman tingling with gratitude. Without it, I doubt seriously that this book would have been written. →

*The role of poseur seems to be the accepted role among Simon and Schuster travel writers. While one journalist plays at being Huck Finn, another plays at being Alexis de Tocqueville. Connoisseurs of the type will want to follow Raban's American Voyage with a look at *American Journey*, Richard Reeves's pretentious retracing of Tocqueville's 1831 itinerary. Mark Twain fans will prefer the Duke of Bilgewater and the Dauphine, the Long Lost Looey of France.

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I know very little
of writers, but people
I do no. You are a
good man to ride
the river with, Jonathan Ravan.

The voyage ends on a note that can only be called near suicidal, and vintage Raban. (Had Bob Kelley been around to observe it, he might well have retracted his endorsement.) Disgusted by the seedy commercialism of the New Orleans French Quarter, Raban noses his boat into the bayous in search of a more appropriate conclusion. In a bar in the mean, flea-bitten town of Houma, he comes close to finding it. While lighting a pipe, he is accosted by a kid who mistakes his tobacco for "shit," and Raban for a federal narc. A knife is pulled—"You pull your f-----' gun on me, man, I'll cut you . . ." "Look, please"—and laid against the author's lapel. The kid sniffs Raban's pouch and backs off in disbelief. "Shit. Why you keeping it in this f------ stuff, man? You trying to get yourself killed?" Raban has been asked this last question so many times that one begins to wonder.

This is the second book in which Jonathan Raban has put himself on display as a piece of human driftwood. Although a majority of reviewers (including the normally sensible Mitchell S. Ross) would love to see him do it again, I wouldn't advise it. For one thing, the seventies are over, Raban's neurasthenia is losing its charm. For another, Raban lacks the survival instincts of a true Huck Finn. If he is to write another travel book, for safety's sake, let it be about French cookery. The alternative may well be a knife in the ribs. □

THE WAYWARD WELFARE STATE
Roger A. Freeman / Hoover Institution Press / $35.00

THE NO-RISK SOCIETY
Yair Aharoni / Chatham House / $25.00, $12.95 paper

John Wettergreen

Only recently has the welfare state, with all its problems, been established here. Franklin Roosevelt, for example, claimed that he came to bring work, not the dole. And, as recently as the presidential campaign of 1964, even liberal Democrats sneered at the notion that the central government ought to provide cradle-to-grave security for everyone, however poor. Thus, when a Grand Old Partisan writes to correct, not to denounce or dismantle, the American welfare state, he is reflecting a remarkable change in public opinion.

Like its predecessor,* Roger A. Freeman's *Wayward Welfare State* demonstrates the enormous growth of government taxing, spending, and employment from 1952 on. But now Mr. Freeman is more concerned with the causes of that growth and its consequences for the American way of life. The growth of American government, he argues, is deformed in two ways: First, the purpose of welfare policies increasingly has been the "redistribution" of personal income, as distinguished from the amelioration of social ills; second, welfare programs have been financed by cuts in national defense. Thus, at the same time that the federal government has been trying to do more to improve the American way of life, it has been doing less to defend and sustain that way.

Mr. Freeman makes his case in overwhelming detail, of which I can give only a whiff here. In every single year from 1952 to the present, Congress has increased the dollars spent for domestic services, while in eight of those years, including the war years of 1969, 1970, and 1971, it has cut the dollar amount for defense. Of course, such figures alone cannot demonstrate that defense was reduced for the purpose of increasing welfare payments. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, in constant dollars, the federal government in 1978 spent 4 percent less for defense and 822 percent more for domestic services than in 1952. (Actually, we know that armed services were cut for welfare programs in 1969, 1970, and 1971, because that is what our political leaders said they were doing.)

The shift toward redistribution is more difficult for Mr. Freeman to quantify than the shift away from arms. This difficulty derives in part from the federal government's refusal since 1964 to specify how many Americans there are in each bracket of personal income; just when the War on Poverty was declared, politicians seemed to lose interest in the numbers of the enemy. However this might be, "Income support [by the government] . . . multiplied tenfold in *constant* dollars between 1952 and 1978," while transfer payments as a percentage of personal income quadrupled.

In the absence of information on income distribution, Mr. Freeman analyzes a variety of income support programs: Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, five work-incentive programs, disability insurance, unemployment insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, public housing and renters' subsidies (but not food stamps or any agricultural programs). Because these programs were intended—at least, putatively—to aid widows, orphans, the blind, invalids, the maimed, innocent victims of economic catastrophes, and those too old or young to support themselves adequately, Congress could increase their benefits without serious opposition. Because these increases were financed by the various progressive income taxes, Mr. Freeman concludes that every increase resulted in the redistribution—that is the equalization—of incomes.

According to Freeman, the "seeds" of the change from the welfare state to the redistributive state were planted during the New Deal, when the radically egalitarian notion "that all shortcomings in human beings or conditions are the fault of society and environment," not of individual choices, was planted in the brains of those "who later became the shapers of public opinion, the makers of public policy decisions, the educators of the next generation." The real trouble started, however, not when welfare benefits began to expand, but when the goal of welfare policy became redistribution.

Worse still, this change was accompanied by a loosening of laws and administrative practices which had once required proof of genuine and otherwise irremediable need as a condition for receipt of benefits. Beginning in the early 1960s, widows and orphans came to be thought of as persons living with minors and without another person to support them; those too old to work became those over 62 years of age; those too young to work became those unqualified for "good jobs"; the blind and the maimed became those with certificates of disability†; and, similarly, almost anyone out of a job for almost

John Wettergreen teaches political science at San Jose State University.

**The Growth of American Government* (Hoover Institution Press, 1975). The volume under review is so much improved that it is an entirely different work.

†In California, the formalization of disability has gone so far that law and administrative practice allow drivers' licenses to people who are legally blind and legally quadriplegic.

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any reason became entitled to public support. In many cases, qualification for one program qualified one for another; for example, unemployment made one certifiably hungry and sick, i.e., eligible for food stamps and Medicaid. Even more importantly, these very standards were enforced upon state and local governments by Congress, the courts, and the federal bureaucracy's policy of "contract compliance." Thus we came to Tip O'Neill's definition of "the poor": all those who benefit from a government program. When President Reagan pledges himself to preserve "the social safety net for the truly needy," he is actually proposing to reverse twenty years of social policy.

These changes in public assistance eligibility amounted to a public devaluation of independence. Since the early 1960s, in other words, government has deliberately refused to distinguish between those who are forced to depend upon their fellow citizens and those who choose such dependency. That devaluation explains Mr. Freeman's major concern: If independence is not prized, it will not be the result of our foreign and defense policies any more than of our domestic policies.

As we have seen, one of the tricks in running a welfare state is to conceal the actual costs and benefits deriving from the various programs. In *The No-Risk Society,* Yair Aharoni evaluates some of the best concealed programs of the American welfare state.

Aharoni explores the vast, and growing, system of "social insurance" in the United States. The Social Security System is the largest and best known of these programs, but there are countless others, whether insuring against default on various kinds of debts, or against floods, violent crimes, riots, commercial and crop failures, wars, airplane accidents, various illnesses and disabilities, unemployment, and death. These programs receive little public scrutiny. Typically, they are kept "off-budget" by the pretense that they cost the citizenry nothing. (Is the price one must pay for the FHA's guarantee of a mortgage a tax?) Because such programs tend "to hide the distribution of economic costs and benefits, to shift the burden of risk, and to influence the allocation of resources," Aharoni calls them "invisible government."

Unfortunately, Aharoni was not content to evaluate social insurance programs. Defining risk as every "uncertain outcome that is also undesirable," Aharoni postulates that a "no-risk society" is the aim of all modern government. Do not police insure against the risk of crime, armies against wars, welfare programs against poverty, public schools against ignorance? Perhaps Aharoni could have been more discriminating. For one thing, all misfortunes are not caused by change, and governments neither use, nor claim to use, insurance programs to govern everything. Schools, for instance, exist to inculcate knowledge, not to counter random ignorance. Moreover, these programs are "insurance" only in a metaphorical sense. They are never sound actuarially. If they really were insurance, only chance—as distinguished from anything intrinsic to the programs—would keep them from going broke. There is more to modern politics than risk-management.

But these objections aside, one can sympathize with Aharoni's attempt to understand modern government as a giant insurance policy. Like Freeman, Aharoni is concerned that the modern state has destroyed the ideal of personal responsibility. If, as he claims, "the days of individualism are certainly over," then the era of social responsiblity, of governmental insurance against every misfortune, must be here. To counter this new spirit, Aharoni takes pains to demonstrate that social insurance really only redistributes property from those who take responsibility for their own lives to those who do not. Invisible government conceals the selfishness of the irresponsible by the sham of social responsiblity. In effect, both Aharoni and Freeman contend that the welfare state thrives on the ideal of personal irresponsibility.

Consider the clearest example of Aharoni's invisible government and Freeman's redistributive welfare state: the Social Security System. Until the System's troubles began to become obvious (around 1965), the OASDI payroll deduction was called a contribution, not a tax. In this way, two public pretenses essential to the legitimacy of Social Security were maintained: First, citizens were encouraged to believe that they were building their own retirement incomes; a "trust fund" was even maintained, where their contributions could pause on the way into their fellow citizens' hands. Citizens were thus encouraged to believe that, because of the System, they would never be forced to depend upon their fellow citizens, and especially upon their children and granchildren. Most people enjoy bearing certain responsibilities, especially naturally moral ones, and even today the Social

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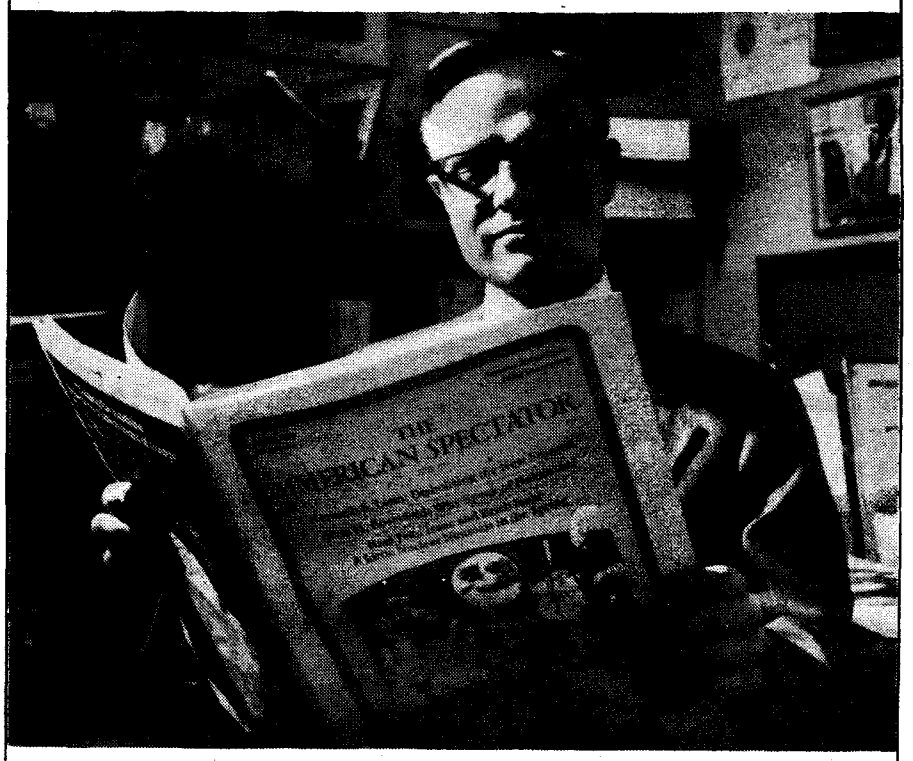

George Nash, author of *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America.*

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Security System survives on its moral capital, for most citizens would demand its abolition if they calculated only their private interests in that giant Ponzi scheme. Of course, the public's support for Social Security has been short-sighted: No government program can make everyone independently wealthy. Nevertheless, the System was founded during the New Deal, and is preserved today by appealing to some of the most decent sensibilities of the American people. These sensibilities are ties of mutual obligation between citizens and between generations, without which the preservation of a free society would be more difficult. It is the maintenance of those ties, not merely the selfishness of the program's participants, that makes any reform of the System extremely unlikely.

As this example illustrates, New Dealers understood that the American welfare state could be founded (as to some extent it is still preserved) upon the principles of self-government. Not the New Deal, but the bureaucratic regime initiated by Kennedy and Johnson saps the citizenry of its resources for self-government by raising taxes progressively, by dishonoring honest labor and decent family life in the name of a spurious poverty, and by placing the details of commerce and local politics under the tutelage of federal regulations. Nor were New Dealers wimpy. They fought, not only in two wars and half a war in Vietnam, but above all on the hustings for the public's support of their programs. Today's regime governs invisibly, not publicly, evincing a design upon the democratic right of self-government.

Contemporary politicians, including many conservatives, could do worse than emulate New Dealers. Indeed, they do. They negotiate the redistributions of entirely relative, private costs and benefits by a regime that strikes at the heart of American self-reliance. □

THE PORTABLE KIPLING

Edited by Irving Howe

The Viking Press, $17.95 / Penguin Books, $6.95

Terry Teachout

Alexander Woollcott's final literary venture prior to his untimely death in January 1943 was an anthology tailored to fit the needs of a very specific audience: America's soldiers and sailors. The volume, called *As You Were*, contained (in Woollcott's words) "a variety of reading matter . . . reprinted on thin paper in a pocket-size volume for the convenience of men who are mostly on the move and must travel light." A neat little handful of a book much like the pre-Random House Modern Library volumes in outward appearance, it received a wide and appreciative circulation in its day.* It also turned out to have a longer life, in a manner of speaking, than any of Woollcott's more original productions; for in 1944, the Viking Press, which published *As You Were*, borrowed its Woollcott-devised format and subtitle—"A Portable Library of American Prose and Poetry"—to use as the trademarks of a new reissue series which has since become a familiar fixture on the American literary scene: the Viking Portable Library.

In a review of the first Portable, a Dorothy Parker anthology, Edmund Wilson summed up those features which have distinguished the many excellent volumes of the Viking Portable Library to this day: "[T]he format of this volume . . . is appropriate to and worthy of the contents. It is compact, well-printed, and small, easy to carry and handle: the kind of thing that ought to be encouraged, as distinguished from the more ponderous type of omnibus." Now Wilson crusaded tirelessly in his later years for an American-made counterpart to Gallimard's celebrated *Editions de la Pléiade*, enumerating the French series' virtues in distinctly similar terms; and it is rather surprising that the critics who have lately declared open season on the ill-begotten Library of America, that etiolated attempt at a home-grown *Pléiade Academique*, seem to have overlooked the fact that we already have in the Viking Portable Library a rough but workable equivalent of our own.

Granted, the Viking Portables are at once rather erratic in quality and far more restricted in scope than the freshly edited, all-encompassing *Pléiade* sets; several of the authors covered by the series do not fit at all well into its stylized single-volume format, and more than a few of the best Viking Portables have been out of print for years. But none of the Portables are less than serviceable, while some (Morton Dauwen Zabel's Henry James, for example, or Bernard DeVoto's Mark Twain) are veritable masterpieces of compression; and at least one, Malcolm Cowley's famous Portable Faulkner, was chiefly responsible for a large-scale revival of interest in the output of a formerly neglected author.

After a long dry spell, Penguin Books took over principal responsibility for the Viking Portable series some six years ago, updating a few of the old classics and commissioning several new volumes: an excellent Nabokov, a very good Shaw, a plausible Graham Greene. The current season has brought us two brand-new Portables; one, Russell Kirk's Conservative Reader, has already been justly praised in these pages.† The other, however, is a bit of a curate's egg: A Portable Kipling edited by, of all people, Irving Howe.

There is a bracing perversity, it must be said, in assigning to the editor of *Dissent* the task of assembling a one-volume compilation of Rudyard Kipling's best work; it is as if Bill Buckley had somehow been conned into editing, say, a Portable Gore Vidal. Mr. Howe is obviously interested in Kipling, and he has some genuinely intelligent, if elaborately tolerant, things to say about him from time to time; but the fundamental lack of sympathy between author and editor necessarily poses a real problem to the reader looking for a solid approach to Kipling. The problems start, logically

Terry Teachout is jazz critic for the Kansas City Star.

*Woollcott's skills as an anthologist, as it happens, were far more considerable than his generally unenthusiastic reviewers cared to admit. *As You Were* is an admirably compact "traveler's library"; and the two long-forgotten *Woollcott Readers*, though marred by what Woollcott called his "incorrigibly miscellaneous" literary tastes, nevertheless served to introduce such first-rate works as *A Handful of Dust*, *Cakes and Ale*, and *A Christmas Garland* to a wider American audience.

†By T. John Jamieson, *The American Spectator*, August 1982.

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enough, with Mr. Howe's introductory essay, a discussion which fails to summarize even briefly the intriguing and substantial body of existing Kipling criticism (Mr. Howe makes no mention of the important contributions of T.S. Eliot, Randall Jarrell, George Orwell, Angus Wilson, and V.S. Pritchett, to name the most obvious examples) and which contains only a mere handful of disjunct biographical details.

Instead, we get an elaborate and forced skein of Kipling-Freud parallels; a diverse assortment of leftish critical clichés; and a passage which tells us a great deal more about Mr. Howe's literary priorities than it does about the place of Rudyard Kipling in English literature: "[A] handful of Kipling's late stories rank with the great short fictions of our century, if not quite with those of Joyce and Lawrence, then certainly with those of Hemingway and Flannery O'Connor." (No prize for picking out the planted axiom in *that* statement.) Not surprisingly, there is no bibliography and only the skimpiest of chronologies.

Mr. Howe has chosen 28 short stories and 58 poems as illustrative of Kipling at his best; and here, I am glad to report, he has not done a half-bad job. Admittedly, he has found room for three insignificant occasional pieces and four children's tales while leaving out such key stories as "'They,'" "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," "'Wireless,'" "An Habitation Enforced," and "'Love-o'-Women.'" The problematic late stories are adequately represented, though (both "Dayspring Mishandled" and "The Gardener" are here, for instance), and there are eight of the Indian stories as well. One could imagine a less perfunctory choice of Kipling's verse, but Mr. Howe's five dozen inclusions are good enough; and in the absence of a better and more sympathetic attempt to anthologize Kipling, Mr. Howe's Viking Portable will do quite nicely.

For all its faults, *The Portable Kipling* is a more than welcome reminder that Viking-Penguin is once again looking to breathe some much-needed life into the Viking Portable series. Nor has the list of possible authors been exhausted by their recent efforts, either. One could imagine a really worthwhile Portable Raymond Chandler or Flannery O'Connor, for instance. J.F. Powers's best work would fit handily into a single volume, as would Colette's. And nothing would be more welcome in conservative circles than a Portable devoted to that most anthologizable of great authors, G.K. Chesterton. Ten years ago, the Viking Portable Library was beginning to look like a thing of the past, and speculation such as this doubtless would have been idle and futile; but today, each season sees one or two imaginative additions to the growing list of Viking Portables—and though *The Portable Kipling* could certainly have been done better, it still deserves to be greeted with genuine praise. □

BISMARCK

Edward Crankshaw / The Viking Press / $19.95

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr.

Confessing his incurable sympathy for England and the English to a friend in 1862, Otto von Bismarck added, almost plaintively, "but they will not let us love them." This thwarted affinity, which was to end in two great world wars, is not the subject of this biography of the Iron Chancellor. But in Crankshaw's pages Bismarck is subjected to all the quibbles, qualms, and complaints that an enlightened Gladstonian conscience can bring to bear upon a master of *Realpolitik*. Bismarck, remembering one of the recurrent terms of scorn that mark his reminiscences, would doubtless find it an example of that "English sentiment" that seemed to him so inappropriate to rational statecraft.

His especial target, when muttering about this "English" or "petticoat" influence, was the Princess Augusta, the liberal wife of the Crown Prince of Prussia and one of Queen Victoria's far-flung brood. He blamed her, for instance, for the pressure brought against William I to avoid the use of heavy siege guns against Paris in the war of 1870-71—a compunction that, to his mind, prolonged the war, increased its political risks for everyone, and for that matter was not any more humane than the alternative: starvation.

Edward Crankshaw's militantly anti-Bismarckian views are not utterly unfounded. As the principal founder of the greater German empire, as conqueror of Austria (1866) and of France (1870), he created the state that Crankshaw as so many before him views as the incubator of twentieth-century German militarism.

Bismarck's extraordinary term as chancellor ended in 1890 and he died eight years later. He did not live to witness the culmination of the strategic problems and trends he managed and manipulated for almost thirty years. Certainly he had an inkiing that the cocky young kaiser, William II, would bring Germany to a bad end. In his memoirs he analyzes the younger William's defects of character with a bluntness not far short of *lèse-majesté*.

But inasmuch as William II *reversed* the policies that Bismarck had successfully urged upon his grandfather—settling on the course of hostility to Russia that Bismarck had worked so hard to avoid—it is extravagant to argue, as Mr. Crankshaw does, that Bismarck was "indirectly" the source of the calamities that were to overwhelm the old Europe in the twentieth century.

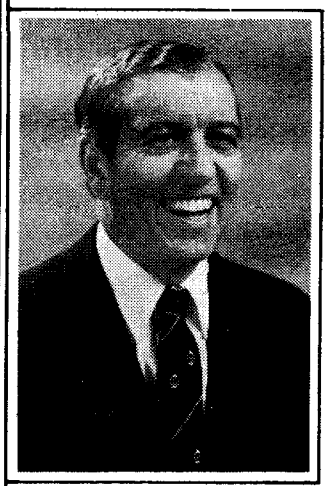
Indeed, this common view of Bismarck happens to be historical nonsense. The doctrine of "indirect responsibility" is tenable only if you take the view—and Mr. Crankshaw doesn't—that the disasters of August 1914 and after were somehow implicit, even foreordained, in the events Bismarck *did* manage: an internal contradiction Mr. Crankshaw doesn't bother to resolve.

At the microscopic level European diplomacy and statecraft in the Bismarckian period were enormously complicated: more complicated than Mr. Crankshaw at times admits. But the main elements are familiar.

After the final defeat of Napoleon, it became the objective of the Allied powers at the Congress of Vienna (1815) to recork the bottle of nationalism and revolution, to demote Napoleon's upstart monarchs, and to resuscitate the dynastic principle ("legitimism") as the fundamental principle of European order.

The legitimist principle was brilliantly applied by Metternich while he survived. But in this Indian summer legitimism was being undercut by industrial development and the middle-class parliamentary liberalism associated with it; by nationalism; and by republicanism. The fabric, for all its outward brilliance, was rotten; and of this fact Bismarck was well aware.

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Washington Post *and former editorial page editor of the* Washington Star.



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Yet he also seemed, at times, to act as if he were the last believer in absolute kingship. He first emerged from obscurity when the 1848 uprisings were shaking the thrones of Europe and the Prussian king was on the point of giving in to the Berlin mob. It was Bismarck, this tall, outwardly phlegmatic Prussian squire with a weakness for poetry, mild hysteria, hot baths, and fruit trees, who braced the king and saved the Prussian system from constitutionalism and liberalism. At least that is what he thought he was doing, at the time.

For all that, Bismarck was not then, nor later, the reactionary he sometimes seemed to be. He was neither a legitimist, nor a believer in feudal obligation or divine right, but a pragmatic supporter of monarchy. He believed that a strong king balanced by a consultative assembly and even a press (and mass suffrage) was a workable form of government. Mr. Crankshaw is indignant at Bismarck's failure to treat the Berlin liberals with sympathy, or even common courtesy. But that was not to his purpose. He wanted a strong German state under a strong, but not autocratic, king; and it was to this objective that he bent his extraordinary talents.

Between 1862 and 1870, with the measured use of Prussian military prowess, he put together a union of the North German states; and, after the French had been beaten in the war of 1870-71, he constructed a German "empire" dominated by Prussia and excluding Austria.

Did Bismarck, then, create, or did he merely channel, the force of German national statism—Mr. Crankshaw's bête-noire? In an age of nationalism ("that beer-hall enthusiasm," as Bismarck scornfully called it) German nationalism was probably irrepressible. Even if Mr. Crankshaw is right in condemning it as Europe's chief mischief-making force, it is not easy to see how Bismarck himself could have suppressed it. The alternative to Bismarck's architecture, at least on paper and to the extent that history discloses missed alternatives, was a continuation of the multiplicity of vest-pocket German principalities, ruled by various kings, princelings, and dukes, all mildly dominated by Austria. Whether a prolongation of this highly civilized arrangement would have made for stability, given the ambitions of the French and the Russians, or merely provided a tempting territorial menu for their consumption, is a question Mr. Crankshaw does not consider.

After 1871 the German empire under Bismarck was a satisfied entity; and the Bismarckian order, brilliantly and sympathetically analyzed by George F. Kennan in his recent *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order* (Princeton, 1979), required vigilant maintenance. Here is why: The continuing decay of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire as the manager of the Balkans and keeper of the Straits under English tutelage left both Russia and Austria with tempting prey. Russia's pan-Slavic agitators yearned to set up a "greater Bulgaria" and to control access to the Black Sea. Austria, a multi-national empire embracing and aspiring to be the patron of rival Slavic principalities, contended bitterly with the Russians for gain and advantage as Turkey faded.

Bismarck correctly saw it as his task to maintain a civil and stable relationship with both Russia and Austria, all the while restraining their Balkan quarrels and refusing to allow Germany to be drawn into them. To this end he drew upon the vestigial dynastic relationship between the German emperor, the emperor of Austria, and the Tsar of Russia to create the "three-emperors' league" of 1871. But the dynastic principle, as noted above, was weakening: already showing those strains that were to destroy it forever within a few decades. Bismarck was its last patron, the last European statesman to use it successfully as a counterweight to nationalism.

As for France its "revanchist" (revisionist or revenge-seeking) elements intrigued tirelessly after 1870 —how tirelessly Mr. Kennan shows —to lure Russia into a military alliance at Germany's expense. This, Bismarck understood, was to be prevented at all cost. The Russian pan-Slavs were natural allies of the French chauvinists. They gradually wore away the preference of the Tsar himself for the German connection by harping upon Russia's holy mission and destiny in the Balkans.

Naturally, Bismarck was enemy number one to these factions; and naturally they worked full time to discredit him, even at times with forged documents. He was portrayed as a diabolical schemer and cynic, thwarting French destiny and tampering with Russian interests in Bulgaria. In fact, Bismarck had no special animus against France; and his Balkan policy was only directed to the avoidance of great-power rivalries that could become a death trap for all: as ultimately, after Bismarck's day, they did.

Mr. Crankshaw's biography is full of interesting subjective judgments about Bismarck's character ("an artist above all . . . a nihilist of genius . . . philistine master of a parvenu kingdom"). Perhaps they are of value. But when combined with Mr. Crankshaw's intense disapproval of Bismarck's undoubted talents for intrigue and prevarication, such colorful impressionism diverts the reader from the complexities of the European situation and from the symmetries of Bismarck's diplomacy. Mr. Kennan's far more serious and scrupulous study (which is only partially about Bismarck) is a necessary antidote to Crankshaw. Read alone, Mr. Crankshaw's book would tend to give the unwary or uninformed reader the mistaken impression that Bismarck operated in a geopolitical vacuum, so free of constraints and conditions that most of the emergent problems were of his making.

Indeed Mr. Crankshaw, usually so judicious, has in this case allowed Gladstonian liberal moralism to run away with the story. Bismarck was no paragon. He was, however, a formidably wise, rational, and skilled diplomatist. To call him an "entrenched defender of the status quo [with] . . . the armament of the revolutionary and the temperament of a Jacobin" is more colorful than exact—or meaningful.

Looking back from a century's perspective, the study of the Bismarckian system seems to this reviewer, as to George F. Kennan, of an importance too obvious to need laboring. Great-power diplomacy in this last period of relative European stability before the cataclysmic wars of the twentieth century provides one of the great laboratories of historical study. Bismarck and his conservative contemporaries sought to preserve stability in an inherently unstable environment. Instability is, of course, latent in any balance of power (or "correlation of forces," as Soviet jargon has it). Any age is fortunate if some masterly, impartial, and clear-sighted strategist understands enough of its points of strain to keep it in repair. This strategic vision and the political skill to apply it successfully are given to few in the measure Bismarck possessed them. And when he went, the balance was soon destroyed.

Of course the correspondences to our age (even though some of the problems retain a curious resonance even after a century's time) are limited. Bismarck's world was cozy and manageable by comparison. There were no revolutionary ideologies of paramount importance, unless pan-Slavism be counted one. Cousinship among the principal monarchies still had some meaning, however attenuated the dynastic principle. There were no puny microstates, swarming and fulminating at a world assembly. And, finally, diplomatists of the old school worked from shared values and established civilities that one would be hard-pressed to discover in the world's turbulent affairs today. □

INSTEAD OF REGULATION: ALTERNATIVES TO FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES
Edited by Robert W. Poole, Jr. / Lexington Books / $25.95

David Asman

Hearken back to those halcyon days immediately following the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States. It was a time of unabashed gloating by conservatives of every stripe. The press had said it couldn't be done. The academicians had said it couldn't be done. But they were wrong, all wrong, and at last we were going to get government off our backs. Certainly, reasonable men could still differ about specific tax policies or spending cuts. But the regulatory hamstrings which had been holding back productivity in this country for well over a decade were at last going to be cut.

Barely audible above this din of celebration were the warnings from a few distant observers. "Wait and see," they cautioned. Unfortunately, one of these spoilers could not be easily dismissed. Chicago economist George Stigler—who knows more about the regulatory apparatus of this country than any man alive—had this to say shortly after Reagan was inaugurated: "I don't expect Reagan to be as good as Carter was on

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deregulation . . . I expect we are going to have more industry regulation over the next four years."

One year later, at a conference sponsored by the Manhattan Institute, five economists and analysts were asked to rate Reagan on his deregulation efforts. James Ramsey, Chairman of Economics at New York University, gave Reagan a D+ in energy deregulation because of the Administration's failure to decontrol gas and dismantle the Department of Energy (the plus was for the decontrol of oil). Marcus Alexis, formerly an anti-regulation plant at the Interstate Commerce Commission, gave Reagan and his questionable appointee at the ICC, Reece Taylor, a D for sluggishness on trucking deregulation. And with regard to agricultural regulations, Federal Reserve Board Vice President Clifton Luttrell commented, "I don't see any great difference between the Carter Administration's policies and those of the Reagan Administration." Similar remarks could be heard from experts on banking deregulation, the minimum wage, and the activities of the Federal Trade Commission.

How is it that Ronald Reagan—who before becoming President made a career of describing the ill-effects of government regulation—has had so little success at deregulating the economy? The answer is unfortunately simple: The regulatory bureaucracy has developed a staying power greater than the political momentum of even this anti-regulation President. It is thus no longer enough to show how regulatory excess stifles the economy and hope such examples will stir regulatory agencies to self-destruct. This is war, and we need combat manuals which describe the most effective and up-to-date methods of liberating our captive economy. *Instead of Regulation: Alternatives to Federal Regulatory Agencies,* a collection of 11 essays on as many federal agencies edited by Robert W. Poole, Jr., is just such a manual.

Before taking over as editor of *Reason* magazine, Poole earned two engineering degrees from MIT, and his book reveals an engineer's penchant for precision. Its purpose, he writes, is

> . . . to bring together in one place a summary of the principal academic findings on eleven major federal regulatory agencies. . . . In each case, we have asked an authority in the field to present an overview of the policy area in which the agency operates and to explain what the agency does and how it operates. Next comes a critical evaluation of the agency's actions and policies, bringing to bear the salient findings of the past two decades. Finally, each author thinks the unthinkable: What if the agency ceased to exist? How would individuals, businesses, labor unions, and others conduct their affairs? How could laws be changed, if need be, to help resolve the problems that inspired regulation in the first place? Is such an alternative in fact possible?

Some of the eleven authors adhere to this formula more closely than others, and it is to Poole's credit that those who do fare far better than those authors who merely remind us of the evils of regulation.

The book's most instructive chapter is entitled "Airline Deregulation: The Anatomy of Reform," a survey of the rise and fall of the Civil Aeronautics Board by U.S. Circuit Judge Stephen G. Breyer and his research associate Leonard R. Stein. The essay gives a blow-by-blow account of the inequitable and inept attempts at airline regulation and of the political maneuvering necessary to dismantle a federal agency. The authors well understand that politicians will not initiate regulatory reform simply because such reform might be practical and logical; deregulation has to be presented as a politically attractive option:

> By the mid-1970s, virtually all economists believed that CAB regulation was economically unsound. Legislators, however, not economists, determine the ultimate course of the law. If regulatory reform was to be accomplished, their support would be required. To obtain this, the advocates of reform needed to develop a case for change that would stand up to serious factual and political challenges, certain to be pressed by groups likely to lose economic advantages.

Once the case for airline deregulation became attractive politically, none other than Ted Kennedy began hearings on CAB deregulation in 1974—which is precisely the point: Deregulation must be an issue that will play to consumer-conscious liberals and pro-business conservatives alike. When a union was forged between Senator Kennedy and President Ford on deregulating the airlines, the 1974 Kennedy hearings generated widespread publicity.

The final stage of airline deregulation was orchestrated by the CAB itself with the appointment in 1977 of Alfred Kahn as chairman. Determined to finish the job started by the Kennedy hearings, Kahn accelerated the orderly transition to open competition among the airlines faster than anyone expected. Finally, the Senate passed the Kennedy-Cannon Bill, the House approved a similar bill several months later, and on October 24, 1978, President Carter signed the Airline Deregulation Act into law. As the authors conclude:

> Despite the glaring deficiencies of airline deregulation, reform would not have been realized without the concerted effort of two presidents, several legislators, and two reform-minded CAB chairmen. With that reform realized, deregulation has begun to prove its own case. Free competition works [the demise of Braniff notwithstanding].

Five other chapters of *Instead of Regulation* also focus on federal attempts to regulate private profits and internal marketing strategies. George Hilton presents the case for deregulating ground transportation, suggesting in fact that the ICC is the next likely candidate for extinction. The Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Federal Communications Commission are discussed with equal panache by respective experts. My only reservations concern the essay on energy regulation by Alan Reynolds, which for the most part decries the effects of domestic controls on the price of oil. This chapter must have been written immediately after Reagan lifted controls on oil, because Reynolds mentions decontrol only in passing. In any case, Reynolds's discussion would have been more valuable had he focused on the much thornier issue of gas decontrol or analyzed the infantile concept of formulating national energy "programs" through a department of energy. But at least Reynolds reminds us how pleased we should be that we are again being served by oil companies and not by OPEC.

The final five essays of the book deal with an area of government regulation about which conservatives and liberals hardly ever agree: worker- and consumer-"protection" laws (and agencies). It is relatively easy to explain how consumers are hurt when companies are not allowed to engage in competitive pricing. But it is more difficult to convince air-breathing consumers that they would be better off without the Environmental Protection Agency.

Most of the authors here do not question whether the cost of consumer and employee protection is "worth it," a stance which would definitely *not* be politic. Instead, they have assumed that both workers and consumers are willing to pay a price for their safety. The question then becomes: Must the government regulate that price? For instance, economist Robert S. Smith offers an alternative to government-enforced merit rating for workmen's compensation insurance. Since most injuries for which workers' compensation is paid are minor, Smith proposes allowing workers' compensation insurance policies with deductible clauses. "In other words, the current notion of employer liability for all accident costs would be maintained, but without allowing employers to insure against the first X dollars of cost." With regard to

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pollution control, Peter Aranson argues that the Environmental Protection Agency is ill-suited to decide cost-benefit issues for local communities, as it now does. He accuses the EPA of expanding its jurisdiction into areas where community needs directly conflict with the EPA edicts. Thus, Aranson recommends dismantling the EPA at the federal level, leaving communities to decide for themselves what action to take with polluters. Other agencies debunked in this section include the Food and Drug Administration, the Consumer Product and Safety Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration (in a chapter by editor Poole).

As we have seen during the first year-and-a-half of Ronald Reagan's presidency, federal regulatory agencies are harder to exterminate than a houseful of cockroaches. If President Reagan is to have any impact on the regulatory morass, he must develop a strategy far more effective than any he has employed thus far. Reading *Instead of Regulation* would be an excellent way to begin. □

CORRESPONDENCE

Lousy Lovers

Re: Taki Sex Article ("American Women Make Lousy Lovers," *TAS*, August 1982).

Here is one of those desperately embarrassing situations bringing to mind the "diva" of the Tabor Opera House. American women doubtless have been sitting and "listening" politely for fear of being rude: See what sparing the pride of a "lousy lover" does?

If Mr. Taki finds American women disagreeable, he must ask himself how they find—found—him.

—Dusa Gyllensvard
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Re: "American Women Make Lousy Lovers" by Taki.

The above referenced article is a joke, right? Because if it's not, you can cancel my subscription and refund the balance of the $18 a year I sent to you to be intellectually stimulated. I cannot believe that your editorial staff actually allowed this piece of trash to be printed.

Though I am terribly insulted by the piece I did learn something: EUROPEAN MEN ARE LOUSY WRITERS. *—Maureen K. Gawler*
Rockville, Maryland

I found Taki's article "American Women Make Lousy Lovers" an unfortunate departure from the usually scintillating reportage of *The American Spectator*. Having found Taki's own emphasis on physical rather than spiritual lovemaking as unfortunate as that of the feminists he decries, I am reminded of Goethe's wisdom: "*Alle menschliche Gebrechen sühnet reine Menschlichkeit*" (i.e., Pure humanity atones for all human crimes and weaknesses).

Taki fails to rise above the feminist sexism he assails by missing an opportunity to call for a recommitment to traditional virtues of chastity and propriety—sorely lacking components in my generation (I am 21) which degrades itself with fleeting, selfish satisfactions imbued with superficiality at the expense of single, long-term spiritual commitments that lead to holy unions of minds and bodies (necessarily in that order). *—Jonathan W. Emord*
DePaul College of Law
Chicago, Illinois

The Delightful Mr. Connell

Greatly enjoyed William H. Nolte's piece on Evan Connell (*TAS*, August 1982), whose Mr. and Mrs. *Bridge* novels are sheer delight.

I also reviewed *Mr. Bridge* when it came out in 1969, and I'm surprised Mr. Nolte didn't call to the attention of your readers the chapter in which Mr. Bridge and his son Douglas square off on the matter of a haircut. I can't recall a more hilarious and poignant vignette. For anyone with teenage sons in the '60s and '70s, it is a memory of long-ago battles to look up and cherish.

Cheever? He had wonderful things. Evan Connell surpasses him.

—F.R. Buckley
Camden, South Carolina

The Aryan Humanist

As a new reader and subscriber (the July issue was my first) I have come late to the Nietzsche controversy. I have not read Werner Dannhauser's essay on Nietzsche in the May issue, but I am surprised by Professor Alderman's attempt to deny that Nietzsche was a Nazi (Correspondence, *TAS*, July 1982).

In section 3 of "The Improvers of Mankind" in his *Twilight of the Idols* (generally regarded as the nearest he came to an ordered summary of his "philosophy") Nietzsche expounds on the virtues of the breeding of definite races and species and applauds the ancient Indian proposal in the Law of Manu to breed four races simultaneously. He talks of the "gentle and rational" people who devised the proposal: "One draws a breath of relief when coming out of the Christian sick house and dungeon atmosphere into this healthier, higher, wider world. How paltry the New Testament is compared with Manu, how ill it smells." . . .

Section 4 finds him describing "Aryan humanity" as "quite pure, quite primordial." He continues: "It becomes clear . . . in which people the Chandala hatred for Aryan humanity has been immortalized, where it has become *genius* . . . Christianity growing from Jewish roots and comprehensible only as a product of this soil, represents the reaction against the morality of breeding, of race, of privilege—it is the *anti-Aryan* religion *par excellence*."

Only a Professor of Philosophy could deny that the author of these sentiments was a Nazi.

—Paul Rowlandson
The National Institute for Higher Education
Limerick, Ireland

Save Our Farms

Most of "The Farmer and the Mall . . ." (by Julian Simon, *TAS*, August 1982) belongs in Current Wisdom.

Simon toys with the term *prime* farmland, as if there is no such land to conserve. There is a good, common sense basis for the concept. Specialists have developed intelligent criteria of land quality. These involve pH level, evapo-transpiration rates, mean soil temperatures, ease of draining the land, and coarseness of soil particles, for example. The above criteria may be modified to fit the land use contemplated. Some economists muddle the discussion by contending that prime land has no stable meaning. They have provided neither intelligent indicators nor a compelling rationale for their claims. . . .

Continuing his wordplay, Simon substitutes "swamps" for "wetlands." Names may change; the ecological functions of the swamps or wetlands are more important. Are swamps places of incubation, development, refuge, or rest for birds, shellfish, and other creatures? Humans may prove too ignorant or too arrogant to appreciate such functions, and consequently destroy them and the wildlife and recreation they sustain. Such follies are typified and perpetuated by smart-alecky use of the term "swamp."

Agricultural land is converted to non-agricultural use much more slowly than is commonly thought. The research wing of the NALS concurs—3 million acres annually is an outlandish figure. Very well. But is it comforting to know that only 500,000 acres annually, near cities, are converted, plus the acreage changed through the flush of interest in exurban and rural living? Whether one is willing to risk further conversion of land may hinge upon one's assessment of present stewardship of land by American farmers. Their record, reflected in studies compiled by the Council on Environmental Quality, is disquieting—recent desertification in the Western plains and valleys, exhaustion of aquifers, and loss of land through erosion (see the 1980 Annual Report, Chapters 7 and 8). Incredibly, Simon offers economic analysis of hornswheat to illuminate the overall problem.

So farmers pursue only their own private interest when they seek to have their land assessed at its agricultural value. Pray tell, how could they have a purer interest in the process? If the value of land for mall/housing/park/road use is $10,000 per acre and up, while the agricultural value is $3,000, property taxes based on non-agricultural assessments will pressure farmers to quit the land. Non-agricultural assessment becomes the ally of developers and their customers/constituents. If Simon seeks pure market determination of land use, he should support tax policies that have a more neutral effect.

Hopefully, farmers and environmentalists/eco freaks will not be stupefied or gulled by economic analysis. Their political activity does hinder the advance of mall culture—assorted department, clothing, shoe, sports, novelty shops, and theaters housed in temperature-controlled, architecturally sterile environments

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at this or that corner of town. If economic principle demands that central city stores, and those located in older malls give way to new mall stores and franchises, then economic principle is stupid and blind. The aspirations of all Simon's clients pale in comparison to the objective of keeping this and succeeding generations of Americans well fed, and feeding (at least) those in other lands who can afford American food. Even the balance of payments may benefit. Let the ingenuity Simon invests in equivocation and irrelevancy be devoted to finding better ways of using our common heritage and trust in the land.

—Philip G. Groth
Janesville, Wisconsin

EDITORIAL
(continued from page 6)

Latin American Marxists do not love us, nor do the members of the PLO. This middle ground is illusory.

The PLO aids, trains, and applauds every anti-American force on earth from North Koreans to North Vietnamese, to Libya, to Cuba, to Nicaragua, to the thugs of the Salvadoran bush. In 1973 a PLO arm murdered the U.S. ambassador to the Sudan and his deputy. The PLO is suspected of murdering the American ambassador to Cyprus (1974) and to Lebanon (1976). It is even suspected of murdering Americans within the United States. It espouses political principles abominable to us. Owing to these principles and to its strategic designs, it rightly perceives us as enemies.

Yet men like John Chancellor and Paul Tsongas find it very difficult to accept the depth of PLO animosity. Much like our right-wing extremists who see Communists under every bed, these melioristic Americanos see potential friends of America everywhere; and there are aides around President Reagan who agree. White House aides Baker & Darman again? My spies are watching.

In foreign policy one must first practice discernment and then face the music. Those who diabolize Israel and El Salvador display neither discernment nor resoluteness. The PLO is a criminal organization. In 1972 its henchmen invaded Munich's Olympic Village and slaughtered 11 unarmed Israeli athletes. In 1974 the PLO seized a Maalot schoolhouse, held over 100 pupils captive, and murdered 20. In 1978 it waylaid a Tel Aviv bus and massacred 33 civilians. It has done much more. It has fired SAM missiles at commercial aircraft. It has highjacked the airplanes of at least eight world airlines. The civil war it precipitated to gain control of Lebanon left over 10,000 dead.

So far as I know the PLO is the only political organization on earth that as a matter of policy eschews battle with its enemies' soldiers for attacking its enemies' unarmed civilians. Yet when Israel cornered these dreadful killers, it was diabolized. The PLO took refuge in a neutral city, and used civilians as shields. Faced with defeat it uttered bloodcurdling oaths. Nonetheless, influential Americans even in the Reagan Administration urged negotiations.

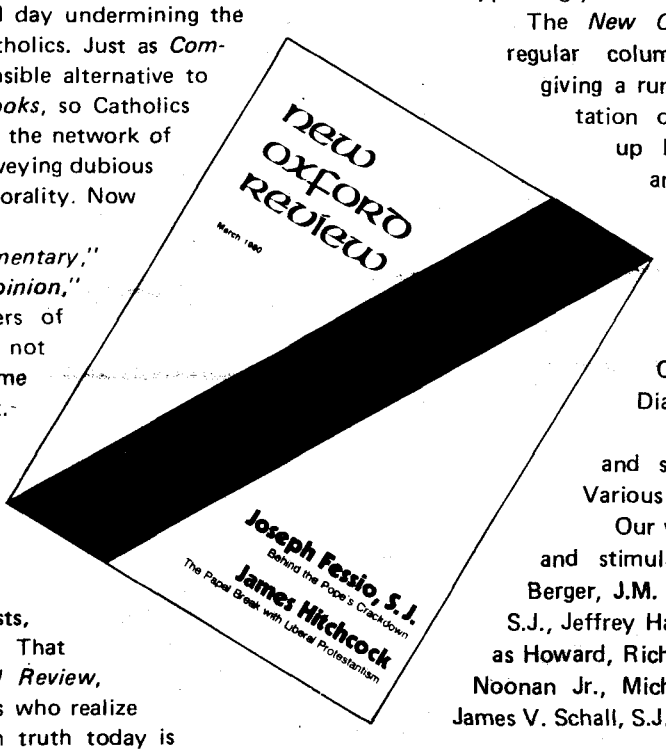
Such Americans live in blissful isolation. Cushioned by vast oceans and by friendly nations north and south, insulated by American affluence, they do not appreciate the depth of the enmities that exist in this world. Yet the enemies of Western democracy are today more violent, blatant, and ubiquitous than were the pre-war Fascists and Nazis. Moreover Americans can now see some of their enemies' most wicked deeds on television as they take place. This is isolationism more profound than that of the 1930s . . . and less excusable. □

SUPPORT THE POPE

Catholic Christians need a monthly magazine devoted to the high-level discussion of general ideas that **stands with Pope John Paul II** in his struggle to save Christian orthodoxy from Hans Kung and other doubting theologians who have had a field day undermining the faith of a generation of Catholics. Just as *Commentary* magazine is the sensible alternative to the *New York Review of Books*, so Catholics need a sensible alternative to the network of Catholic opinion journals purveying dubious theology and pre-Christian morality. Now they have it.

We are a "Catholic *Commentary*," not a "Catholic *American Opinion*," because we believe defenders of doctrinal orthodoxy must not allow themselves to become captives of the radical right.

Now there is a Catholic journal that is written for both laity and clergy, and focuses its fire on the modernists while maintaining open doors to Evangelicals, Pentecostalists, and the Eastern Orthodox. That journal is the *New Oxford Review*, published by Anglo-Catholics who realize that the battle for Christian truth today is not being fought between Catholics and Protestants, but inside all denominations and communions.



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CURRENT WISDOM

Writer's Newsletter

Art in the Boonies as reported upon by the eloquent Elizabeth Krajeck Cohen in *Writer's Newsletter*, another prodigy of the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts:

The Fourth University of Kentucky Women Writers Conference was held in Lexington, Kentucky on April 1-3 with the purpose of bringing together listeners and writers with guest writers and scholars. . . .

The tone of the conference was set by the Department of English at UK which used facilities and funding sources which provided for an open and free conference. Accessibility through no-charge sessions and free childcare combined with selective but representational guest artists placed the emphasis on rethinking sexually defined notions of women in art and women artists to satisfy a need which perhaps cannot be defined by gender: freedom to create, recreate, and freedom to fulfill personal expression through art and sexual preference.

[*May-June 1982*]

The New Yorker

From Alpo to the groin, the innocent origins of another of America's noble few:

Neil was twelve the first time he recognized in himself something like sexuality. He was lying outside, on the grass, when Rasputin—the dog, long dead, of his childhood—began licking his face. He felt a tingle he did not recognize, pulled off his shirt to give the dog access to more of him. Rasputin's tongue tickled coolly. A wet nose started to sniff down his body, toward his bathing suit. What he felt frightened him, but he couldn't bring himself to push the dog away. Then his mother called out, "Dinner," and Rasputin was gone, more interested in food than in him.

It was the day after Rasputin was put to sleep, years later, that Neil finally stood in the kitchen, his back turned to his parents, and said, with unexpected ease, "I'm a homosexual."

[*May 31, 1982*]

International Mensa Bulletin

The dismal science as illuminated by a genius:

I do not believe the "Big Lie" that economists pawn off on us: that an increased supply of money causes inflation because of some mysterious natural law—a law which is sometimes referred to as "The Invisible Hand." This "Hand" is supposed to be just a term to describe the workings of the free market, but it sounds a lot like superstitious nonsense to me. I call it "The Invisible Hoof."

You and I are both part of this free market. Yet I know *I'm* not raising prices and causing inflation. Are you? If you are, why? Are you a traitor? Or are you just a victim of this "free" market, like the rest of us? There can be no uncontrollable or unusable natural laws regarding money or economics, since money and economics are man-made inventions. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know.

No "Invisible Hand" changes the prices on the tags in a store when the owner is looking the other way. If they do change, why can't the owner change them back again? We must surely be aware that it is management that raises or lowers the prices.

Conservative economists keep parroting that inflation is caused by increased money supply, but they never say how or why. "It's just the 'Invisible Hand,' nothing can be done about it."

The greedy rich have been doubletalking down to us in sneers for ages, and we all gobble it up. Lord only knows why.

I can figure out one, and only one, reason for prices to go up when the money supply goes up: The greedier businessmen say to themselves, "Hey, the customers have more money! I can raise my prices and take it away from them! It's better in my pocket than in theirs!"

So, they do. Then, unions demand higher wages to match (or more than match) the higher prices, and inflation is under way.

The cure? Either a saner brain in the average human cranium, or strict wage and price controls. Or, abolish money and live like civilized human beings for a change.

Have fun. Don't take any paper dollars.

[*May 1982*]

Republican National Committee

Richard Richards, chairman of the Republican National Committee, begins another doleful yet urgent request for funds from Mr. Paul H. Vivian, stalwart fat cat and contributor of $2 to the Republican campaign for an American Renaissance:

I have been struggling with this letter for five days because what I must tell you, as a friend, isn't easy.

Despite your generous financial support this year, I just received a report telling me we are falling behind schedule in raising money for our campaign programs. And this could hurt President Reagan and our Republican candidates in Indiana and across the nation in a major way.

I've put off writing to you about this financial crisis because I realize how much you've done already. But you're one of the few people I know who understands what's at stake in this election.

[*July 22, 1982*]

The Great Books Series

With the flap flap of angels' wings all around him, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin lays down sociological observations of a moral sort on the problem of our time:

I think straight Christians have to reach the same position vis-à-vis gays. They are different—that's all. What I have come to recognize is that just as "the black problem" turned out to be a problem of white racism, just as "the woman problem" turned out to be a problem of male sexism, so "the homosexual problem" is really the homophobia of many heterosexuals. I know gays have hang-ups; so do straights, and I leave these hang-ups to the psychologists. I am appalled at the promiscuity of some gays, but no more appalled than are many other gays. Promiscuity is cruel and degrading in any sexual orientation, but straights bear a special responsibility for the promiscuity of gays. Just as blacks used to be labeled shiftless by whites who made sure there would be no reward for their diligence, so straights call gays promiscuous while denying support for overtly gay stable relationships—the spouse in the parsonage.

The Courage to Love
by William Sloane Coffin
[Harper & Row, 1982]

The New York Times

Pidgin thought from the luminous editorial page of the *New York Times:*

It's a phenomenon that adds a paradoxical twist to the endless debate over capital punishment: men who gave no value to the lives of others show contempt for their own.

Mr. Coppola wants to be executed in the summer so as to minimize the disruption later when his sons have to go back to school. That's a lot more consideration than he showed for Muriel Hatchell of Newport News when he broke into her home, took $3,000 and choked her to death when she refused to say where there was more money.

This condemned and self-condemned man shows no concern for prisoners on death row elsewhere. His execution will make other executions easier. Men like Frank Coppola have no right to make or influence public policy, and there may be no more reverberating public policy question than for the state to kill. And when has an electrocution been so tailored to the personal preferences of the killer?

We hope Gov. Charles Robb stays this sentence and insists on life imprisonment. Frank Coppola has already killed enough.

[*August 10, 1982*]

In These Times

The Darwinian phenomenon sadly discovered in the Great Republic by two crack sociologists for *In These Times*, a progressive organ of thought:

Searching for the American Dream where the sun shines brightly, where money and rewards trickle down from the White House in the sky like early morning dew, Antonio and Kay Garza left their Ohio home for San Antonio, Texas, only to find their dream shattered in a deserted wasteland.

"We came to San Antonio to work, not to die," wrote Garza in a suicide note. "But Reagan economics has nothing trickling down to us. I have gone as far as I can go with our lives. My wife, Kay, and I are hardworking people that have been reduced to beggars almost."

Police found the couple dead in their car with a suicide note, bankruptcy papers, a rifle and an empty wallet, according to the *New York Times*.

[*August 25-September 7, 1982*]

Indiana Review

A rising Proust blubbers and blubbers in another of the sprightly intellectual reviews supported by our lowly taxpayers via the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts:

It is spring, and when I drive I often see lumps in the middle, or along the side of the road. Sometimes I do not look closely, so what is actually lying in the road is left to my imagination. It could be a shoe or a doll or a newspaper or a paper bag. Or it could be a dog or a squirrel or a bird. When I don't look, I never know for sure what is there. But sometimes I do look closely as I pass by. Then I know whether the lump is an old shoe or a crushed squirrel. If it is a shoe I feel good, better than I had been feeling, and I cheerfully drive on to wherever I am going. If it is a squirrel I am not happy—I am not sure how to feel.

[*Winter 1982*]

Grapevine Weekly Magazine
(Ithaca, New York)

An introduction to logic by the eminent Dr. Ronald Leifer, author of *Shamans in Scientists Clothing*:

John Hinckley, Jr. prepared to shoot Reagan deliberately. We are deliberately preparing to use nuclear weapons. It's a deliberate preparation for destruction. If Hinckley's insane then everybody who's in favor of the arms race is insane. If he's sane and responsible then we'd better stop preparing for nuclear war because there will be nothing left for us to do but press the button and that'll make us exactly like Hinckley.

[*June 24-30, 1982*]

The Village Voice

A pithy report on one of the recent masterworks of an aspiring Michelangelo:

After signing personal-injury waivers, nearly 50 art lovers entered the Bonlow Gallery last Thursday to view the ignition of Dennis Oppenheim's monumental *Launching Structure #2. An Armature for Projection. (From the Fireworks Series)*. Unfortunately, after two minutes of flying debris and outrageously dense smoke, no one saw the promised "mid-station of formulating idea/structure . . . in which thought ignites and comes into contact with form." They were too busy running for the door.

[*June 8, 1982*]

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